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LÉONTINE DISCOVERS THE BODY OF LUCIEN
(*Splendors and Miseries.*)

SCENES OF PARISIAN LIFE

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

SECOND VOLUME

SPLENDORS AND MISERIES

Continued



PHILADELPHIA

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1895-6
GEORGE BARRIE'S SONS

THE END OF BAD ROADS

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PART THIRD

THE END OF BAD ROADS

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At six o'clock the next morning, two wagons, such as the people in their forceful language call "salad baskets," driven post-haste, left the Force in the direction of the Conciergerie and the Palais de Justice.

There are few idlers who have not seen this rolling gaol; but, although books are generally written for Parisians alone, foreigners will doubtless be well content to read here the description of this formidable equipage of our criminal law. Who can tell? The Russian, Austrian or German police, the magistrates of countries to which *salad baskets* are unknown, may perhaps profit by this; and in many foreign countries the imitation of this method of transportation will certainly be of benefit to the prisoners.

This ignoble wagon, a yellow box raised upon two wheels and lined with sheet iron, is divided into two compartments. In the forward portion there is a bench covered with leather, behind which hangs a curtain. This is the free compartment of the salad basket; it is intended for an officer of the court

and a gendarme. A strong latticed framework of iron completely separates this species of cab from the second compartment, in which are to be found two wooden benches placed lengthwise as they are in an omnibus; on these the prisoners sit after they have entered by steps leading up to a solid door which opens at the back of the wagon. The name of salad basket comes from the fact that since the wagon was originally left open on all sides, the prisoners had to be fastened in exactly as leaves of lettuce are secured in their basket. For greater security in case of accident, this vehicle is followed by a mounted gendarme, especially when it carries condemned criminals to the place of execution. Thus escape is impossible. The wagon, lined with iron, cannot be pierced by any tool whatsoever. The prisoners, carefully searched on their arrest or upon their entry into gaol, can at most have preserved a watch spring, somewhat adapted for filing bars, but powerless against flat surfaces. Thus the salad basket, perfected by the ingenuity of the Parisian police, has at length come to serve as a model for the cellulated wagon which transports convicts to prison, and which has replaced that horrible cart—the shame of earlier civilization—in spite of the lustre shed upon it by Manon Lescaut.

The first step in the judicial process is to hurry the latest arrivals from the different prisons of the capital by means of the salad basket to the Palais de Justice, in order that they may be interrogated by the examining magistrate. In prisoners' slang

this is known as "passing examinations." Next the accused are taken from these same prisons to the Palace for trial, provided that their cases come within the jurisdiction of the police court; if, however, to make use of criminal terms, high crimes are to be judged, the prisoners are removed from the gaols to the Conciergerie, the prison of the Department of the Seine. Finally, criminals condemned to death are conveyed in a salad basket from Bicêtre to the Barrière Saint Jacques, the square assigned for public executions since the Revolution of July. Thanks to philanthropy, the sufferers are no longer compelled to undergo the ignominy of the journey which was formerly made from the Conciergerie to the Place de Grève in a cart precisely like those which woodsellers employ. This cart is used to-day merely to carry the bodies from the scaffold. Without this explanation the remark of a famous criminal to his accomplice as he was stepping into the salad basket, "Now it rests with the horses," could not be understood. Nowhere can a man go to his last punishment more commodiously than in Paris.

On the occasion of which we speak, the two salad baskets, which had appeared at so early an hour, were employed for the rare service of transferring two new arrivals from the gaol of the Force to the Conciergerie; and each prisoner occupied a salad basket by himself.

Nine-tenths of readers and nine-tenths of the last tenth are certainly ignorant of the broad differences

which separate these words: *inculpé, prévenu, accusé, détenu, maison d'arrêt, maison de justice,* or *maison de détention.* All alike will probably be surprised to learn here that the expressions are intimately connected with the whole code of French criminal law. We shall presently give a clear and succinct account of them to the reader, as much for his instruction as for the intelligibility of this story. Besides, when it is known that the first salad basket contained Jacques Collin, and the second, Lucien, who in a few hours had fallen from the very pinnacle of social greatness to the depths of a dungeon, the reader's curiosity will be sufficiently aroused. The attitude of the two accomplices was characteristic, Lucien de Rubempré hid himself to avoid the looks which passers-by cast upon the bars of the sinister and fatal wagon as it passed through the rue Saint Antoine, on its way to the Quays, through the rue du Martroi and through the Arcade Saint Jean, beneath which it was necessary, at that time, to pass in order to traverse the square of the Hôtel-de-Ville. To-day this arcade forms the gateway of the hotel of the Prefect of the Seine, in the vast municipal palace. The daring convict pressed his face against the grating of his wagon, between the gendarme and the officer of the court, who were talking to each other confident in the security of their salad basket.

The days of July, 1830, and their tempestuous violence, have hidden former events beneath their uproar, while political interests absorbed France so

completely during the last six months of that year that nowadays people can remember only with the greatest difficulty, if at all, the private, judicial and financial catastrophes, extraordinary as they are, which form the annual consummation of Parisian curiosity, and which were not wanting during the first six months of that year. It is then necessary to tell how Paris was for a moment excited by the news of the arrest of a Spanish priest in the house of a courtesan, and of the apprehension of the fashionable Lucien de Rubempré, the destined husband of Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, effected upon the highroad to Italy, at the little village of Grez; for both prisoners were implicated in a murder, the fruits of which amounted to seven millions. The scandal of this trial reached such a height that for several days it surpassed the prodigious interest of the last elections held in the reign of Charles X.

Firstly, this criminal trial was due in part to an accusation made by the Baron de Nucingen. Next, the arrest of Lucien, on the eve of his appointment as private secretary to the first Minister of State, shocked the noblest society of Paris. In every Parisian salon more than one young man remembered how he had envied Lucien when the latter had been favored by the handsome Duchess de Maufrigneuse; and all the women knew that he had stolen the love of Madame de Sérizy, the wife of one of the most prominent personages of the State. Lastly, the beauty of the unfortunate young man enjoyed a singular celebrity in the different

worlds which compose Paris: in the world of nobility, in the financial world, in the world of courtesans, in the world of young men, and in the literary world. Thus for two days all Paris had been talking of these two arrests. The examining judge, upon whom the trial had devolved, M. Camusot, saw therein the possibility of advancement; and in order to proceed with all possible alacrity he had given orders that the transfer of the two culprits from the Force to the Conciergerie be made as soon as Lucien had arrived from Fontainebleau. Since the Abbé Carlos had passed but twelve hours, and Lucien but half a night in the Force, it is unnecessary to describe this prison, which has since then been entirely rearranged; and as for the particulars of the registration, they were but a repetition of what was to pass at the Conciergerie.

But before entering upon the terrible drama of a criminal trial, it is indispensable, as we have said before, to explain the normal proceedings in a process of this kind; for, in the first place, its diverse phases will be better understood both in France and abroad; and secondly, those who are ignorant thereof will learn to appreciate the economy of criminal law as it was conceived by the legislators under Napoleon. It is all the more important inasmuch as this great and noble work is at this moment threatened with destruction by what is known as the penitential system.

A crime is committed; if it be serious, the *inculpés* are arrested by the police of the district and

secured in the gaol, which among the people goes by the name of *violin*, doubtless because within arise the sounds of music of men crying and of men weeping. Thence the *inculpés* are led before the Commissioner of Police, who proceeds with a preliminary examination and who has power to release the prisoners if there be any mistake. After this the *inculpés* are transported to the station house of the Prefecture, where the police retain them to be placed at the disposal of the public prosecutor and of the examining judge, who, informed more or less promptly, according to the gravity of the offence, arrive on the scene and cross-question the prisoners, who are still under provisory arrest. Governed by the nature of the presumptions, the examining judge issues a warrant from the station house, and has the *inculpés* registered at a *maison d'arrêt.* Paris has three *maisons d'arrêt:* Sainte Pélagie, the Force and the Madelonnettes.

Notice the term *inculpés.* The French code has created three essential distinctions in criminal guilt: *inculpation, prévention, accusation.* So long as the warrant is not signed, the supposed authors of a crime, or of a grave offence, are the *inculpés;* beneath the weight of the warrant they become *prévenus;* they remain *prévenus* pure and simple so long as the examination continues. The examination ended, the moment that the tribunal has decided that the *prévenus* must be handed over to the regular court, they pass into the condition of *accusés* when the royal court has determined, upon the

request of the public prosecutor, that the charges warrant the transfer of the prisoners to the Court of Assize. Thus persons suspected of a crime pass through three different stages, through three sieves, before they come into the presence of what is called the justice of the country. In the first stage, innocent persons possess means of justification in plenty: the public, the keepers, the police. During the second stage, they are before a magistrate, confronted by witnesses, and judged either by a Chamber of the Tribunal at Paris, or by an entire Tribunal in the departments. In the third, they appear before twelve justices, and the writ of assignment to the Court of Assize may, in case of error, or on account of any defect in the formality of the proceedings, be altered to a writ of assignment to the Court of Appeals. The jury does not realize how much popular authority, both administrative and judicial, it annuls when it acquits the accused. Thus, at Paris, we do not speak of other tribunals, it seems to us well nigh impossible for an innocent man ever to sit upon the benches of the Court of Assize.

The *détenu* is the condemned man. The criminal law of France has created *maisons d'arrêt*, *maisons de justice*, and *maisons de détention*, judicial differences which correspond to those of the *prévenu*, the *accusé* and the *condamné*. Imprisonment is but a slight penalty, the punishment of a slight offense; but imprisonment in the *maison de deténtion* is bodily restraint, which, in certain cases, is ignominious.

Thus the present supporters of the penitential system overturn an admirable criminal code, in which the punishments were carefully graduated, and will eventually chastise peccadillos with almost as much severity as the very greatest crimes. The reader will be able to compare in the "Scenes of Political Life"—see *A Dark Affair*—the curious differences which existed between the criminal law of the code of Brumaire, in the year IV, and that of the Code Napoléon, by which it was replaced.

In the greater number of important trials, such as this, *inculpés* become *prévenus* without delay. Justice issues an immediate warrant from the gaol or from the place of arrest. As a matter of fact, in the largest number of cases the *inculpés* are in flight or must be surprised without an instant's delay. Thus as we have seen, the police, which is only the instrument of execution, and justice had come upon the domicile of Esther with the swiftness of lightning. Even had not demands for vengeance been whispered by Corentin in the ear of the Judicial police, there would still have remained the accusation of a robbery of seven hundred and fifty thousand francs, made by the Baron de Nucingen.

Just as the first wagon, which contained Jacques Collin, arrived at the dark and narrow passage of the Arcade Saint Jean, a blockade of carriages obliged the postilion to stop beneath the arcade. The prisoner's eyes burned across the grating like two carbuncles, in spite of the evident approach of death, which, the evening before, had brought the

warden of the Force to believe in the necessity of summoning a physician. Free for an instant, since neither the gendarme nor the officer looked round to see their *customer,* these blazing eyes spoke such plain language that any sagacious judge, such as M. Popinot, for example, could have recognized instanter the convict clothed in the sacrilege of a priestly robe. From the moment that the salad basket had left the gate of the Force, Jacques Collin had been examining every detail of his surroundings. In spite of the rapidity of his course he enveloped, with an eager and accurate eye, the houses from garret to basement. He saw all the passers-by, and scrutinized every one. God does not embrace the means and end of His creation more perfectly than this man noted the smallest differences in the mass of people and things which he passed. Armed with a single hope, as the last of the Horatii was armed with his sword, he waited for help. To any other than this Machiavel of prisons, this hope would have appeared so impossible to realize that he would mechanically have followed the path trod by all the guilty. No culprit dreams of resistance when he is placed in the situation in which justice and the police of Paris plunge prisoners, and less than ever when he is locked in solitary confinement like Lucien and Jacques Collin. It is difficult to imagine the sudden isolation which comes upon a *prévenu:* the gendarmes who arrest him, the commissioner who cross-questions him, the guards who lead him to prison, the turnkeys who conduct him

to what is literally his dungeon, the wardens who hold him beneath his arms in order to place him in a salad basket, all the persons who have been about him since his arrest are mute or else take note of his words so that they can repeat them either to the police or to the judge. This complete separation, so simply attained, between the whole world and the *prévenu* causes a total subversion of his faculties, an overpowering prostration of the mind, most perfect when the man is not, through his antecedents, rendered familiar with the course of justice. The duel between the culprit and the judge is all the more terrible because justice has for its allies the silence of its walls and the incorruptible indifference of its agents.

Nevertheless, Jacques Collin, or Carlos Herrera it is fitting to give him one or the other of these names according to the necessities of his situation, had long been familiar with the methods of police gaol and justice. This colossus of craft and of corruption had employed all the powers of his mind and the resources of his talents for imitation in playing to perfection the amazement and the simplicity of innocence, without ceasing, to deceive the magistrates with the comedy of his death agony. As we have seen, Asia, that wise Locusta, had made him swallow a poison weakened in such a manner as to produce the likeness of a mortal malady. Thus the action of M. Camusot and the Police Commissioner, as well as the interrogative activity of the public prosecutor, had been

checkmated by the action and the activity of a crushing attack of apoplexy.

"He has poisoned himself!" M. Camusot had exclaimed, horrified by the sufferings of the pretended priest, when the officers had carried him down from the garret, writhing in terrible convulsions.

Four policemen had with difficulty succeeded in bearing the Abbé Carlos down the staircase to Esther's chamber, where all the magistrates and gendarmes were assembled.

"It was his best course, if he is guilty," remarked the attorney.

"Then you think him ill?" inquired the Police Commissioner.

Police doubt everything, without exception. The three magistrates had then held a colloquy, as may be supposed, apart; but Jacques Collin had divined the subject of their whispered conversation from their faces, and made use of this information to render the summary examination, usually held at the moment of arrest, impossible, or at least wholly insignificant. His words were but muttered phrases wherein Spanish and French were interwoven to form nonsense.

At the Force the comedy had obtained a success yet more complete, owing to the fact that the *Chief of the Secret Service*—an abbreviation of the words chief of the brigade of the police of the secret service,—Bibi Lupin, who had formerly arrested Jacques Collin in the cheap lodging house of

Madame Vauquer, was away on duty in the departments, and his place taken by an agent. This man was designated to become the successor of Bibi Lupin, and to him the convict was unknown.

Bibi Lupin, himself an ex-convict, had been, at the galleys, the companion of Jacques Collin, but had since become his personal enemy. His hatred traced its source to quarrels from which Jacques Collin had always come forth victorious, and to the supremacy which Trompe-la-Mort had exercised over his companions. Lastly, for ten years Jacques Collin had been the guardian of returned convicts, their chief, their adviser in Paris, their depositary, and consequently the deadly antagonist of Bibi Lupin.

Although he had been placed in solitary confinement, Carlos counted upon the intelligent and absolute devotion of Asia, his right arm, and perhaps upon Paccard, his left arm, who he flattered himself would again return to his allegiance when the careful lieutenant had once succeeded in placing the seven hundred and fifty thousand stolen francs in some secure nook.

Such were the reasons for the superhuman minuteness with which he examined everything which he passed. Strange fortune! These hopes were destined to be fully realized.

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The two massive walls of the Arcade Saint Jean were covered to the height of at least six feet with a cloak of permanent mud, produced by the continual splashing of wheels in the neighboring gutter; for at this time foot passengers had no protection from the constant succession of carriages, or from what were then called *kicks* from carts, other than a narrow ledge of curbstones, long since broken by the hubs of passing wheels. Here more than once a cart loaded with stone had struck and bruised some absent-minded person. Such was Paris, for a long time and in many quarters. This detail describes the narrowness of the Arcade Saint Jean, and shows how easily the passage might be blocked. A cab had entered by the Place de Grève, and as a woman peddler, nicknamed *the four seasons*, had just pushed her hand-cart full of potatoes through the rue du Martroi into the arcade, the appearance of the third vehicle upon the scene occasioned a blockade. The foot passengers in alarm rushed in various directions, looking for a curbstone to place them beyond the reach of the old-fashioned hubs, whose length was so excessive that they had eventually to be modified by law. When the salad basket arrived, the arcade was barricaded by one of those women venders of fruit whose type is the more curious as it is still to be seen in Paris, in spite of

the increasing number of fruit shops. She was so evidently the fruit seller of the streets that a policeman, had the institution been created before that time, would have left her free to wander without asking to see her license, in spite of her sinister face which reeked with crime. Her head, covered with a plaid handkerchief, soiled and ragged, bristled with unkempt locks, and hair stiff as a wild boar's. Her red and wrinkled neck was hideous to look upon, and her scarf was too scanty to conceal skin bronzed by sun and dust and mud. Her gown looked like patchwork. Her shoes, yawning with rents, seemed to grin at her face, as full of holes as her gown. And what an apron! A sticking plaster had been cleaner! At ten paces this walking heap of fetid rags could but offend delicate nostrils. Her hands had reaped a hundred harvests! This woman came from a Witches' Sabbath or from some storehouse of beggary. But what looks! what impudent intelligence, what concentrated life, when the magnetic rays of her eyes and those of Jacques Collin met to exchange a single idea.

"Get out of the way, you old home for vermin," cried the postilion gruffly.

"Don't run over me, sir knight of the guillotine," answered she, "your merchandise isn't worth as much as mine."

Endeavoring to squeeze herself against the wall in order to leave the passage-way free, the peddler blocked the path during the time needful for the accomplishment of her project.

"Oh! Asia!" thought Jacques Collin, who recognized his accomplice instantaneously, "all is well."

The postilion continued to interchange courtesies with Asia, and carriages accumulated in the rue du Martroi.

"Ahé! Pécairé fermati. Souni là. Vedrem!" cried old Asia, with those intonations peculiar to street venders, who garble their words so vilely that they become mere sounds comprehensible for Parisians alone.

During the uproar in the street and in the midst of the shouts which arose from the surrounding drivers, nobody heeded this savage scream which seemed to be the peddler's cry. But these sounds, which Jacques Collin caught distinctly, poured into his ear in a preconcerted jargon, mingled with fragments of bastard Italian and Provençal, this terrible sentence:

"Your poor boy is taken; but I am there to watch over you. You shall see me again."

In the midst of the infinite joy which his triumph over justice caused him, for now he hoped to be able to establish communications with the outer world, Jacques Collin was struck by a reaction which would have killed another man.

"Lucien arrested!" he said to himself, and his consciousness almost left him. For him this news was more frightful than the rejection of a petition, had he been condemned to death.

Now that the two salad baskets are rolling along

the quays, the interest of this story demands that a few words be spent upon the Conciergerie as it was at the time they were to arrive there. The Conciergerie, historic name, terrible word, but still more terrible in reality, is bound up with the revolutions of France, and especially with those of Paris. It has seen the greater number of noble criminals. If, of all the monuments of Paris, this is the most interesting, it is also the least known—to people who belong to the higher classes of society; but in spite of the immense interest of this historic digression, it will be quite as swift as the course of the salad baskets.

Who is the Parisian, the foreigner or the countryman who, after two days spent in Paris, has not noticed the black walls flanked by three massive towers like pepper boxes, two of which are almost exact mates, the sombre and mysterious ornament of the quai des Lunettes? This quai begins at the foot of the Pont au Change and extends as far as the Pont Neuf. A square tower, called the Tour de l'Horloge, from which the signal of Saint Bartholomew was sounded, a tower almost as lofty as that of Saint Jacques la Bucherie, marks the palace and forms a corner of the quai. These four towers, these walls are covered with that black dampness that comes over every façade in Paris which faces toward the north. Toward the middle of the quai, at a deserted arcade, begin the private buildings, whose erection was determined in the reign of Henry IV., by the construction of the Pont Neuf.

The Place Royale was a reproduction of the Place Dauphine. It is in the same style of architecture, brick framed by borders of freestone. This arcade and the rue de Harlay mark the boundaries of the palace to the west. Formerly the Prefecture of Police and the mansion of the first presidents of Parliament were connected with the palace. The Cour des Comptes and the Cour des Aides, situated here, completed the supreme justice of the sovereigns of France. Thus before the Revolution, the palace enjoyed by nature that isolation which today men seek to create about it.

This square, this island of houses and of monuments, amongst which stands the Sainte Chapelle —the most splendid jewel of Saint Louis' casket; this spot is the sanctuary of Paris: it is its holy place, its sacred ark. Originally this space included the limits of the original city, for the site of the Place Dauphine was a meadow dependent upon the royal domain, on which there stood a mill once used as a mint. Hence comes the name rue de la Monnaie, given to the street which leads to the Pont Neuf. Hence, also, is derived the name of one of the three round towers—the second—which is called "La Tour d'Argent;" and this seems to prove that here, too, money was coined in primitive times. The famous mill, which is to be seen in the ancient maps of Paris, should, in all likelihood, be dated to a period later than the years when money was coined in the palace itself; and, no doubt, that building was owing to an improvement in the art of minting.

The first tower, almost united to the Tour d'Argent, is named the Tour de Montgomery. The third, the smallest, but the best preserved of the three, for it has kept its battlements, is known as the Tour Bonbec. The Sainte Chapelle and these four towers—including the Tour de l'Horloge—determine accurately the circumference, the perimeter, as any clerk, employed for the register of public lands will tell you, at the palace, from the Merovingians to the accession of the house of Valois; but, for us, who are following its transformations, this palace represents more especially the epoch of Saint Louis.

Charles V. was the first king to abandon the palace. He bestowed it upon the newly created Parliament, and went beneath the protection of the Bastille to live in the famous Hôtel Saint Pol, against the walls of which in later times was built the Palais des Tournelles. Then, under the last Valois, royalty left the Bastille for the Louvre, which had been its first fortress. The earliest dwelling of the kings of France, the Palace of Saint Louis, which has kept simply the name of "Le Palais," designed to show its pre-eminence, is included within the Palais de Justice; it now forms the cellar of that building, for, like the Cathedral, it was built in the Seine, and built so carefully that the river, at its highest level, scarcely covers its first steps. The quai de l'Horloge buries beneath twenty feet of earth these thrice secular constructions. Carriages roll at the height of the capitals of the great columns of these three towers, whose

elevation was formerly designed to harmonize with the elegance of the palace, and to give a picturesque effect as they rose over the water; for to-day these towers still rival in height the loftiest monuments of Paris. When one contemplates this vast capital from the summit of the lantern on the Pantheon, the palace, with the Sainte Chapelle, still appears the most monumental among so many monuments. This palace of our kings, over which you walk when you tread the vast "Salle des pas Perdus." was a marvel of architecture, and thus it still is to the intelligent eyes of the poet who comes to study it, in his examination of the Conciergerie. Alas! the Conciergerie has invaded the palace of kings. The heart bleeds to see how the despoilers have mutilated the dungeons, the by-ways, the corridors, the guard rooms, the halls without light or air, in this splendid composition wherein the Byzantine, the Roman, and the Gothic—those three great principles of ancient art—have been combined in the architecture of the twelfth century. This palace is the monumental history of France in its earliest stage; as the Château de Blois is its monumental history in its second stage. In the same manner, as in a single court at Blois—see *Study of Catherine de Medicis, Philosophical Studies*—you can admire the Château of the Counts de Blois, that of Louis XII., that of François I., that of Gaston; just so at the Conciergerie you will find in the same spot the characteristics of the earliest races, and in the Sainte Chapelle the architecture of Saint Louis.

Municipal council, if you give millions, place at the architect's side a poet or two, if you would save the cradle of Paris, the cradle of kings, while you endeavor to endow Paris and the sovereign court with a palace worthy of France; it is a question to be studied for years before a stone is laid. One or two more prisons built like la Roquette, and the Palace of Saint Louis will be saved!

To-day there are many plagues which infect this gigantic monster buried beneath the palace and beneath the quai, like one of those antediluvian creatures among the plaster casts of Montmartre; but the greatest of all is the fact that it is the Conciergerie! Everybody understands this word. In the early times of the monarchy, villains—it is better to cling to this orthography by which the word retains its meaning of peasant—and townsmen belonged to municipal or seignorial jurisdictions, while noble offenders and the possessors of large or small fiefs were brought before the king and confined at the Conciergerie. As only a few of these noble offenders were ever arrested, the Conciergerie was large enough for the king's justice. It is difficult to determine the exact site of the original Conciergerie. Nevertheless since the kitchens of Saint Louis still exist and to-day form what is known as the *Souricière* (the mouse trap), it is to be presumed that the original Conciergerie was situated on the spot where stood, before 1825, the Judicial Conciergerie of Parliament, beneath the arcade at the right of the exterior grand staircase, which leads to the Cour

Royale. Thence, until 1825, every condemned prisoner went forth to his punishment. Thence went forth all the state criminals, all the victims of statecraft: the Maréchale d'Ancre as well as the Queen of France, Semblançay as well as Malesherbes, Damien as well as Danton, Desrues as well as Castaing. Fouquier Tinville's old office occupied the present site of the Attorney-General's cabinet, so that the public prosecutor could watch the prisoners condemned by the revolutionary tribunal file past him in their carts. Thus the steel-hearted butcher could cast a final glance over the *batch.*

Since 1825, under the ministry of M. de Peyronnet, a great change has taken place in the palace. The old wicket of the Conciergerie, behind which once passed the ceremonies of registry and search, was closed and transported to the spot where it may be seen to-day between the Tour de l'Horloge and the Tour de Montgomery, in an inner court marked by an arcade. To the left is the Souricière, to the right the wicket. The salad baskets enter this somewhat irregular court and can stop there, turn with ease, or, in case of tumult, can be protected against any attempt at rescue by the strong iron grating of the arcade; while, formerly, they had not the slightest facilities for manœuvering in the narrow space which divides the exterior grand stairway from the right wing of the palace. Nowadays the Conciergerie hardly suffices for the number of accused, since accommodation is needed for three hundred persons, men and women, and

receives neither *prévenus* nor *détenus*, excepting on such rare occasions as that which brought thither Lucien and Jacques Collin. All who are prisoners there must appear before the Court of Assize. As an exception to the rule, the board of magistrates suffers culprits of the upper class, who have already been sufficiently dishonored by the verdict of the Court of Assize, to be imprisoned outside of the Conciergerie if they prefer to serve out their sentences at Melun or at Poissy. Ouvrard chose to be confined at the Conciergerie rather than at Sainte Pélagie. At this very moment the notary Lehon and the Prince de Bergues are imprisoned there through sufferance, which, however arbitrary, is full of humanity.

Ordinarily, the *prévenus*, whether they are *passing examinations*—to use the palace slang—or whether they are summoned to appear on the benches of the police court, are removed from the salad baskets directly to the Souricière. The Souricière, which is opposite the wicket gate, is composed of a certain number of cells, constructed within the kitchens of Saint Louis, and here the *prévenus* taken from their prisons await the hour of their appearance before the tribunal, or the arrival of the judge who is to examine them. The Souricière is bounded on the north by the quai, on the east by the guard-house of the municipal guard, on the west by the courtyard of the Conciergerie, and on the south by an immense vaulted hall—doubtless the ancient banqueting hall—which is now used for no

particular purpose. Above the Souricière there is an interior guard-house, which commands through its window a view of the courtyard of the Conciergerie; it is occupied by a departmental brigade of gendarmes, and here it is that the stairway ends. When the hour of judgment sounds, bailiffs have already called the roll of the *prévenus*, as many gendarmes as there are prisoners descend from their quarters. Each gendarme takes a *prévenu* by the arm, and thus in couples they march down the stairway, traverse the guard-room, and arrive by certain passages at an apartment adjoining the court-room, where sits the famous sixth chamber of the tribunal, upon which the hearing of cases from the police courts has devolved. This path must be followed by the *accusés* on their way to and from the Conciergerie.

In the Salle des pas Perdus, between the door of the first chamber of the tribunal for trying First Offences, and the steps which lead to the sixth chamber, the stranger notices instantly, though he be walking there for the first time, a doorway without a door, unadorned by architectural device, a square ignoble hole. It is through this that judges and lawyers pass into the lobbies and the guard-room and descend to the Souricière and to the wicket of the Conciergerie. All the offices of the examining judges are situated in this part of the palace on different stories. These are reached by narrow staircases—a labyrinth too apt to bewilder the stranger. The windows of these offices open,

some on the quai, others on the courtyard of the Conciergerie. In 1830 several offices of examining judges looked out upon the rue de la Barillerie.

Thus when a salad basket turns to the left in the courtyard of the Conciergerie it carries the *prévenus* toward the Souricière, when it turns to the right it brings the *accusé* to the Conciergerie. It was then toward the latter side that the salad basket, which contained Jacques Collin, was directed, in order to deposit its occupant at the wicket. Nothing is more formidable. Criminals or visitors behold two barred gates of wrought iron separated by a space of about six feet, which always open one after the other, and across which everything is noted so carefully, that persons who have been granted permission to enter pass across this interval before the key grates in the lock. The examining magistrates, even those from the office of the public prosecutor, cannot enter before they are recognized. Do but speak of the chance of communication or escape!—The warden of the Conciergerie will wear upon his lips a smile which will freeze the doubts of the boldest romancer in his struggle against reality. In the annals of the Conciergerie the escape of La Valette alone is known; but the certainty of an august connivance, to-day proved beyond a doubt, has diminished, if not the devotion of a wife, at least the apparent danger of a failure. Standing upon this ground and judging of the nature of the obstacles, the truest friends of the marvelous will recognize that in times past these obstacles

have been what they still are, invincible. No expression can depict the strength of the walls and vaulted ceilings. Although the pavement of the courtyard is on a level with that of the quai, after you have passed the wicket it is still necessary to descend several steps before arriving at a great vaulted hall, whose mighty walls, ornamented by splendid columns, are flanked by the Tour de Montgomery, which nowadays forms part of the domicile of the warden of the Conciergerie, and by the Tour d'Argent, which serves as a dormitory for the watchmen, keepers, or turnkeys, whichever you are pleased to call them. The number of these guards is not so large as might be imagined—they are but twenty.—Their dormitory as well as their bedding does not differ from that of the *pistole*. This name comes, no doubt, from the fact that the prisoners used to pay a pistole a week for this lodging, the bareness of which recalls the cold garret where many a poverty-stricken genius has dwelt in Paris at the outset of his career. To the left in this vast entrance hall stands the recorder's office of the Conciergerie, a sort of closet built of glass, in which sit the director and his clerk, and where the gaol-book is kept. There the *prévenu* and the *accusé* are enrolled, described and searched. There is decided the question of lodging, the solution of which is dependent upon the prisoner's purse. Opposite the gateway of this hall there is a glass door opening into a parlor where relatives and lawyers talk with the prisoners through a wicket with a double

grating of wood. This parlor receives its light from the interior prison yard, where the prisoners may breathe the open air and take exercise at certain prescribed hours.

This great hall, lighted by the uncertain light of the two wickets, for the only window which opens upon the front court-yard is entirely concealed by the recorder's office, presents to the eye an atmosphere and a light perfectly in harmony with the images preconceived by the imagination. It is the more dreadful when, looking in a direction parallel to the Tours d'Argent and de Montgomery, you perceive mysterious crypts, vaulted, awful, and without light, which lead past the parlor to the dungeons of the Queen and Madame Elizabeth and to the solitary cells called *les secrets*. This labyrinth of freestone, which once witnessed the feasts of royalty, has become the cellar of the Palais de Justice. From 1825 to 1832 it was in this vast hall, between a great stove by which it was heated and the first of the two wickets, that the prescribed change of clothes was made by the prisoner. Even now a man does not walk without a tremor across these flags which have felt the horrid secrets of eyes that have looked upon them for the last time.

To descend from his frightful wagon, the sick man had need of the assistance of two gendarmes, who lifted him, one by each arm, and carried him like a lifeless body into the recorder's office. As he was dragged along, the dying man raised his eyes toward heaven with the expression of a

Saviour descended from the cross. Certainly in no picture does Jesus present a face more cadaverous or more distorted than did the counterfeit Spaniard; he seemed about to render up his last breath. When he was seated in the office he repeated in a feeble voice the words which he had addressed to everybody since his arrest:

"I am known to his excellency, the Spanish ambassador."

"Tell that," answered the warden, "to the examining judge."

"Ah, God!" replied Jacques Collin, with a gasp, "cannot I have a breviary? Will they never allow me a doctor? I have not two hours to live."

As Carlos Herrera was to be placed in solitary confinement, it was useless to ask of him whether he desired the privilege of a *pistole,* that is to say the right to inhabit one of those rooms which enjoyed the sole comfort permitted by law. These rooms are situated at the end of the yard, of which mention will be made hereafter. The bailiff and the recorder went through the formalities of registering the prisoner's name with phlegmatic deliberation.

"Your honor," said Jacques Collin, in execrable French, "I am a dying man. You see it. Tell the judge if you can; above all, tell him as soon as possible that I solicit as a favor the very test which a criminal should fear most; to appear before him the instant that he arrives; for my sufferings are

really intolerable, and when I see him all mistakes will be at an end."

The general rule; all criminals talk of mistakes! Go to the prisons. Question the prisoners; they are almost all victims of some mistake of justice. Thus this mere word raises an imperceptible smile to the faces of those who come into contact with *prévenus, accusés* or *condamnés.*

"I can speak to the examining judge of your request," answered the warden.

"I shall bless you, then, sir!" replied the false Spaniard raising his eyes toward heaven.

As soon as he was registered, Carlos Herrera, supported on either side by a municipal officer and accompanied by an overseer, who had been informed by the warden of the cell in which the *prévenu* was to be confined, was conducted through the subterranean maze of the Conciergerie into a chamber which, though certainly healthy, whatever philanthropists may say, was without the possibility of communication with the outer world.

When he had disappeared, the overseers, the warden of the prison, the clerk, the bailiff himself, and the gendarmes looked at one another, as if every man were asking his neighbor's opinion; every face expressed doubt. But at the appearance of the other prisoner the spectators reassumed their habitual uncertainty concealed beneath an air of apparent indifference: except under extraordinary circumstances, the keepers of the Conciergerie feel but little curiosity; to them criminals are what customers

are to barbers. Thus those formalities, which alarm the imagination, are accomplished by them more simply than bargains are made in the business world, and often more politely. Lucien's appearance was that of disheartened guilt; he had lost hope and surrendered himself mechanically to his fate. Since he had left Fontainebleau, the poet had been contemplating his ruin, and saying to himself that the hour of expiation had struck. Pale, wasted, ignorant of all that had happened since his departure from Esther's house, he knew that he was the intimate companion of an escaped convict; a situation which pictured clearly catastrophes worse than death. When his thoughts took shape, the idea of suicide rose before him. He wished at any price to escape the ignominy which he beheld dimly like the fancies of a painful dream.

Jacques Collin, as the more dangerous of the two prisoners, was placed in a cell built entirely of freestone, which received its light from one of those small inner yards such as are found within the palace, and which was situated in the wing containing the office of the Public Prosecutor. This little court served as a prison yard for the women's quarters. Lucien was led away in the direction his friend had taken, for according to the orders given by the examining judge, the warden had made preparations for him in a cell next to the *pistoles*.

Ordinarily, people who have never become entangled with criminal law conceive the blackest ideas of solitary confinement. The idea of criminal

justice is not yet separated from antiquated ideas of ancient torture, pestiferous prisons, cold walls whose stones sweat tears, rough gaolers and coarse food, the needful accessories of dramas; but it is not useless to say here that these exaggerations exist on the stage alone, and that such scenes raise a smile to the lips of magistrates and lawyers, and of those who from curiosity or another reason have visited the prisons. For many years prison life was terrible. It is certain that under the ancient parliament, during the reigns of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., the accused were thrown pell-mell into wretched quarters built above the old wicket. The prisons were one of the crimes of the revolution of 1789, and the visitor has only to see the cell of the queen and that of Madame Elizabeth in order to feel deep horror for ancient forms of justice. But nowadays if philanthropy has done incalculable evil to society, it has at least done some good to individuals. We owe to Napoleon our criminal Code, which, even more than the civil Code whose reform in certain respects is urgent, will remain one of the greatest monuments of that short reign. This new criminal law closed an abyss of suffering. We may even affirm that, setting aside the fearful moral torture which preys upon persons of the upper class when they are in the power of the law, the action of this power has a softness and simplicity all the greater since they are unexpected. The *inculpé* and the *prévenu* are certainly not lodged as if they were at home, but the necessities of life are not

wanting in Paris prisons. Besides, the heaviness of the prisoner's heart deprives life's comforts of their normal importance. It is not always the body that suffers. The condition of the mind is so turbulent that every kind of inconvenience of brutality, if it be met with in his environment, is easy for the prisoner to bear. We must admit that in Paris above all, the innocent man is promptly set at liberty.

On entering his cell Lucien found in it the faithful image of the first room he had occupied in Paris at the Hotel Cluny. A bed such as those which are found in the cheapest lodging houses of the Latin Quarter; cane-bottomed chairs, a table and a few utensils composed the furniture of one of those chambers, wherein two prisoners are often placed when their behavior is good and when their crimes belong to some such reassuring category as forgery or bankruptcy. This resemblance between the spot which he had reached in innocence and that to which he had now come, at the lowest point of shame and degradation, was so perfectly comprehended by one last effort of his poetic fibre, that the unfortunate young man burst into tears. For four hours he wept, in appearance insensible as a stone statue, but suffering from all his disappointed hopes, wounded by the ruin of every social vanity, tortured by the stings of his pride, and cut off from all the *selves* which make up the lover, the dandy, the Parisian, the poet, the voluptuary, the ambitious, lucky, privileged man. Everything within him was bruised by this Icarian fall.

When Carlos Herrera was left alone in his cell he walked round the room as the polar bear walks about his cage in the Jardin des Plantes. He examined the door minutely, and made sure that excepting the prescribed peep-hole no orifice had been made. He sounded every wall, he looked up the chimney through the mouth of which came a feeble light, and he said to himself:

"I am in safe keeping."

He sat down in a corner where the eye of a keeper applied to the grated peep-hole could not see him. Then he took off his wig and immediately tore from it a paper which had been glued to the lining. That side of the paper which had been in contact with the head was so greasy that it seemed to be a part of the tegument of the wig. Had Bibi Lupin thought of taking off this wig to prove the identity of the Spaniard with Jacques Collin, no suspicion of this paper would have crossed his mind, so completely did it seem to form part of the wig-maker's work. The reverse side of the paper was still white and clean enough to receive a few lines of writing. The difficult and delicate operation of tearing it from the lining had been begun at the Force; two hours would not have sufficed, and half of the day before had been spent upon it. The prisoner begun by cutting this precious paper in such a manner as to procure a band of from four to five lines in breadth. This he divided into several portions, and then restored his supply of paper to its singular hiding place, after having previously

moistened the lining of the wig with gum arabic by the aid of which he could re-establish the adherence of the paper. Next drawing from a lock of his hair, where it had been fastened by glue, one of those bits of lead fine as the shank of a pin, the invention of which, by Susse, was at that time very recent, he broke off a fragment of it, long enough to write with yet small enough to hold within his ear. Having concluded these preparations with the rapidity and finish of execution peculiar to old convicts who are as adroit as monkeys, Jacques Collin seated himself on the foot of his bed and began to meditate upon the nature of his instructions to Asia. He felt certain of finding this woman in his path, so confidently did he count upon her ingenuity.

"In my immediate examination," thought he, "I played the part of a Spaniard, spoke French badly, said that I was intimate with the Spanish ambassador, alleged diplomatic privileges and understood nothing of what was asked of me. All this has been played in a low key, with rests, sobs, and all the *consonance* of a dying man. Let us stand our ground. My papers are correct. Asia and I will pull the wool over M. Camusot's eyes; he is scarcely redoubtable. Now then as to Lucien. His courage must be kept up. I must reach the boy at any cost and trace out his plan of conduct: otherwise he will betray himself, betray me and ruin everything. Before his examination he must be taught to sing a different song. Lastly, I need witnesses to testify that I am a priest.

*

Such was the moral and physical situation of the two prisoners, whose fate depended at this moment upon M. Camusot, examining judge in the Tribunal of First Offence of the Seine, sovereign arbiter, during the time allotted him by the criminal code, of the smallest details of their existence; for he alone had power to allow the chaplain or the doctor of the Conciergerie or anybody whomsoever to communicate with them.

No human power, not the king, nor the keeper of the seals, nor the prime minister can encroach upon the authority of an examining judge; nothing can stop him, nothing can command him. He is a sovereign subject alone to his conscience and to the law. At this time when philosophers, philanthropists and publicists are incessantly occupied in diminishing all social authority, the right conferred by our laws upon the examining judges has become the object of attacks, all the more violent because they are in part justified by this power, which is, we admit, exorbitant. Nevertheless this power should remain unattacked by all intelligent men; its exercise may in some cases be weakened by a special employment of caution; but society already shaken to its base by the lack of intelligence and by the feebleness of juries—those august and supreme magistracies which ought never to be entrusted

to any but chosen men of high reputation—would be menaced with destruction if the column which upholds the whole fabric of our criminal laws should be broken. Preventive arrest is one of those terrible yet necessary powers, the danger of which is counterbalanced by their very grandeur. Besides, to mistrust the magistracy is a beginning of social dissolution. Destroy the institution; reconstruct it upon other bases; demand, as before the revolution, enormous guarantees of money from the magistracy; but believe in it! Do not make of it the image of society in order to heap insults upon it. To-day the magistrate, paid like any other officer, and generally poor, has bartered his former dignity for an insolence which seems intolerable to all whom the law has made his equals, for insolence is a kind of dignity devoid of its foundations. There lies the vice of the existing institution. If France were divided into ten departments, it would be possible to raise the position of the magistracy by requiring from the candidates the possession of enormous fortunes, but with twenty-six departments this becomes impossible. The only improvement that it is fair to demand in regard to the exercise of the powers confided to the examining judges, is the remodeling of the *maison d'arrêt.* Arraignment as a *prévenu* should make no change in the habits of individuals. The *maisons d'arrêt* in Paris should be built, furnished and arranged in such a manner as to effect a distinct alteration in the public attitude toward *prévenus.* The law is

good, it is necessary; the administration of laws is bad, and custom judges laws after the manner in which they are administered. In France, Public Opinion by an inexplicable contradiction condemns *prévenus* and restores *accusés* to their former status. Perhaps this is the result of the essentially critical spirit that prevails among Frenchmen. This inconsistency on the part of the Parisian public was one of the motives which led to the catastrophe of this drama; it was even, as we shall see, one of the most powerful. To be in the secret of these terrible scenes which are acted within the office of an examining judge; to understand with clearness the respective situations of the two warring parties, the *prévenus* and the law, whose struggle has for its object the secret kept by the former against the curiosity of the judge, who is aptly nicknamed "Old Curiosity," in prison slang, we must not forget that the *prévenus,* kept in solitary confinement, are entirely ignorant of everything that the six or seven publics which form the public, say of everything that the police and justice know and of the little that the papers publish in regard to the circumstances of the crime. Thus to a *prévenu,* information such as that which Jacques Collin had just received from Asia in regard to the arrest of Lucien, is like a rope to a drowning man. For this reason we shall see a project fail which, without this communication, would certainly have ruined the convict. When once these conditions of the prisoner's situation are understood the most

self-controlled minds will be wrought upon by the result of these three causes of terror: solitude, silence and remorse.

M. Camusot, son-in-law of one of the ushers of the king's cabinet, already so well known that it is unnecessary to explain his connections and position, was at this moment plunged in perplexity almost equal to that of Carlos Herrera in regard to the examination that had been entrusted to his care. But lately president of the Tribunal of a department, he had been promoted from this office to the highly enviable position of judge at Paris, through the influence of the celebrated Duchess de Maufrigneuse, whose husband, at once companion to the Dauphin and colonel of one of the cavalry regiments of the royal guard, was as high in favor with the king as was his wife with MADAME. For rendering a very slight service, which chanced to be of great importance to the duchess, on the occasion of a charge of forgery brought by a banker of Alençon against the young Comte d'Esgrignon—see in the Scenes of Provincial Life, *The Cabinet of Antiques*,— he was promoted from a simple judgeship to the presidency of a provincial court, and later became an examining judge at Paris. During the eighteen months he had been sitting in the most important tribunal of the realm, he had already been able, upon the recommendation of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, to serve the interests of a noble lady no less powerful than she, the Marquise d'Espard; but his hopes had been disappointed—see *The Interdiction*.—

Lucien, as we have seen in the beginning of this story, in order to revenge himself on Madame d'Espard, who wished to have her husband declared incapable of conducting his affairs, was able to prove the truth of the facts to the Attorney-General and to the Count de Sérizy. When these two great powers declared in favor of the Marquis d'Espard, the wife had only escaped the censure of the court through the clemency of her husband. The evening before, upon learning of Lucien's arrest, the Marquise d'Espard had despatched her brother-in-law, the Chevalier d'Espard to Madame Camusot's house. Madame Camusot went at once to call upon the illustrious marchioness. She returned at dinner time and took her husband aside into her bedroom:

"If you can send that little fool, Lucien de Rubempré, to the Court of Assizes and make his condemnation certain," whispered she, "you will be a counsellor of the Royal Court—"

"How so?"

"Madame d'Espard would like to see the poor fellow lose his head. I felt cold shivers run down my back when I heard the words that hate can make a pretty woman utter."

"Don't mix yourself up in criminal matters," answered Camusot.

"Mix myself up!" replied his wife. "Anybody might have listened to us without understanding a word of what it was all about. The marchioness and I were both of us as delightfully hypocritical as you are at this moment. She wished me to

thank you for your services in her behalf, and told me that, in spite of ill success, she was not ungrateful. She talked to me about the terrible responsibility that the law puts upon you. 'It is frightful to be obliged to send a man to the scaffold, but with such a villain as *he* it is but justice!' She deplored the fact that such a handsome young man, who had been introduced to Paris by her cousin, Madame du Châtelet, had turned out so badly. That is the path down which bad women, like a Coralie or an Esther, lead young men who are dishonest enough to share their vile earnings. Then came splendid tirades on charity and religion! Madame du Châtelet had told her that Lucien deserved a thousand deaths for having almost killed his sister and his mother. She went on to speak to me about a vacancy in the royal court, she knew the Keeper of the Seals. 'Your husband, madame, has an admirable opportunity of distinguishing himself,' said she, in conclusion. And so this is my reason for thinking so."

"We distinguish ourselves every day by doing our duty," said Camusot.

"You have a long road to travel, if you are a magistrate everywhere, even with your wife!" exclaimed Madame Camusot. "I once thought you a fool, now I admire you."

The magistrate wore upon his lips one of those smiles as peculiar to his class as that of a danseuse is to hers.

"Madame, may I come in?" asked the maid.

"What is it that you want?" demanded her mistress.

"Madame, the Duchess de Maufrigneuse's waiting maid came here during madame's absence, and begs madame, on behalf of her mistress to come to the Hotel de Cadignan immediately."

"Postpone dinner," said the judge's wife, remembering that the driver of the cab which had brought her was waiting for his payment.

She put on her hat, stepped into the cab, and in twenty minutes was at the Hotel de Cadignan. Madame Camusot was introduced by a private passage into a boudoir communicating with the duchess' bed chamber. After some ten minutes the duchess herself appeared in a gorgeous gown, for she was about to leave for Saint Cloud, whither a court invitation had summoned her.

"My dear friend, between you and me a word alone is necessary."

"Yes, Madame la Duchess."

"Lucien de Rubempré has been arrested; your husband is in charge of his case; I guarantee the poor boy's innocence; let him be set at liberty before twenty-four hours. This is not all. Somebody wishes to see Lucien to-morrow secretly in his prison; your husband may, if he wish, be present, provided that he does not allow himself to be seen. I am faithful to those who serve me, you know it. The king expects much from the courage of his magistrates in the serious difficulties which lie before him. I will place your husband in

the fore front, I will recommend him as a man devoted to the king, even at the risk of his head. Our Camusot will first be counsellor, then first president somewhere—Adieu. They are waiting for me—You will excuse me, won't you? You are not only conferring a favor upon the Attorney-General, who must not be mentioned in this regard: you are also saving the life of a woman lying at death's door —Madame de Sérizy. Thus you cannot want for support. You receive this in confidence, I have no need to recommend—you understand!"

She placed a finger upon her lips and was gone.

"And I, who could not tell her that the Marquise d'Espard wishes to see Lucien on the scaffold!" thought the magistrate's wife, as she walked back to her cab.

She arrived at her house in such a state of excitement that the moment he saw her, the judge exclaimed:

"Amélie, what is the matter?"

"We are between two fires."

She recounted her interview with the duchess, whispering the words in her husband's ear; so great was her anxiety lest the maid be listening at the door.

"Which of the two is the more powerful?" said she in conclusion. "The marchioness almost compromised you in that stupid attempt to have her husband pronounced incapable of managing his affairs, while we owe everything to the duchess."

"One made me vague promises while the other

said, 'First you shall be counsellor, and then, first president!' God keep me from advising you, I shall never mix myself up with criminal matters; but it is my duty to recount to you faithfully what is said at court and what is in the wind."

"You don't know, Amélie, the message which the Prefect of Police sent me this morning, and by whom! By one of the most important men of the general police of the kingdom, the Bibi Lupin of politics, who told me that the government had secret interests in this trial. Let's have dinner and go to the Variétés. We'll talk to-night of all this in the silence of my office, for I shall need your intelligence; the judge's perhaps will not suffice."

Nine-tenths of magistrates will deny the influence of the wife over her husband upon such an occasion as this; but if it is one of the most marked social exceptions, we may remark that it is true, though accidental. The magistrate is like the priest, especially at Paris, where the flower of the magistracy are to be found; he speaks rarely of criminal affairs unless the case be closed. The wives of magistrates not only pretend to know nothing, but even more than this, they all have a sufficiently acute sense of prudence to divine that they will injure their husbands if, when they know a secret, they allow any trace of their knowledge to become apparent. Nevertheless, on great occasions, when there is some prospect of advancement in case such and such a resolution is taken, many a

wife has, like Amélie, aided the determination of a magistrate. In short, these exceptions, the more easy to deny as they are always unknown, depend entirely upon the manner in which the struggle between two characters is enacted in the bosom of a family. But in the Camusot family the gray mare was the better horse. When all the household was asleep the magistrate and his wife sat down at a desk on which the judge had spread all the documents relating to the case.

"Here are the memoranda which the Prefect of Police sent at my request," said Camusot.

"THE ABBÉ CARLOS HERRERA.

"This individual is certainly the person named Jacques Collin, alias Trompe-la-Mort, whose last arrest, dating back to the year 1819, was effected at the residence of a certain Madame Vauquer, landlady of a cheap lodging house in the rue Neuve Sainte Geneviève, where he was living under the assumed name of Vautrin."

On the margin the following lines were written in the prefect's own hand:

"*Orders have been telegraphed to Bibi Lupin, chief of the secret service, to return immediately in order to testify to the identity of the priest with Jacques Collin; for he has known the latter personally, as he arrested him in 1819, by the co-operation of a certain Mademoiselle Michonneau.*"

"The persons who were lodging at the time in

the Maison Vauquer are still alive and can be summoned in order to prove the identity.

"The so-called Carlos Herrera is the intimate friend and adviser of M. Lucien de Rubempré, whom for the past three years he has furnished with considerable sums, evidently the profits of thefts.

"This joint liability, if the identity of the so-called Spaniard with Jacques Collin can be established, will be the condemnation of M. Lucien de Rubempré.

"The sudden death of the agent Peyrade is due to poison administered by Jacques Collin, by Rubempré, or by their accomplices. The reason for the murder comes from the fact that the agent had been for some time past upon the track of these two wily criminals."

The magistrate pointed to this sentence written upon the margin by the Prefect of Police himself:

"This is my personal knowledge, and I am certain that M. Lucien de Rubempré has most shamefully deceived the Count de Sérizy and the Attorney-General."

"What have you to say to this, Amélie?"

"It is frightful," answered the judge's wife; "go on."

"The substitution of the Spanish priest for the convict Jacques Collin is the result of some crime more skillfully committed than that by which Cogniard became Count de Saint Hélène."

"LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRÉ.

"Lucien Chardon, son of an apothecary of Angoulême, and whose mother was a daughter of the

house of Rubempré, owes to a royal ordinance the privilege of bearing the name of Rubempré. This permission was granted at the solicitation of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse and of Count de Sérizy.

"In 182—, this young man came to Paris, without any means of support, in the train of the Countess Sixte du Châtelet, then Madame de Bargeton, cousin of Madame d'Espard.

"Ungrateful to Madame de Bargeton, he lived for some time with a woman named Coralie, formerly an actress at the Gymnase, who, for his sake, had left M. Camusot, a dealer in silk, of the rue Bourdonnais.

"Soon plunged into poverty through the insufficient support which this actress gave him, he compromised his respectable brother-in-law, a printer in Angoulême, very seriously, by issuing counterfeit notes, for the payment of which David Séchard was arrested, during a short visit of the aforesaid Lucien in Angoulême.

"This affair determined Rubempré's flight; he suddenly reappeared, however, in Paris in company with the Abbé Carlos Herrera.

"With no apparent means of subsistence this Lucien spent on an average, during the first three years of his second sojourn in Paris, about three hundred thousand francs, which he could only have obtained from the so-called Abbé Carlos Herrera; but by what means?

"Over and above this, he has recently disbursed upward of a million for the purchase of the Rubempré

estate, in order to fulfill a condition necessary for his marriage with Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu. The rupture of this engagement is owing to the fact that the Grandlieu family, to whom M. Lucien had stated that his funds came from his brother-in-law and sister, obtained information in regard to those respectable persons, M. and Madame Séchard, notably through the Attorney Derville; and not only were they totally ignorant of these acquisitions but they even supposed that Lucien was very deeply in debt.

"Moreover, the fortune inherited by M. and Madame Séchard consists in real estate; and their money, reckoned after their own declaration, amounted to two hundred thousand francs.

"Lucien has been living secretly with Esther Gobseck; it is then certain that the vast sums lavished by the Baron de Nucingen, this woman's protector, have been transferred to the aforesaid Lucien.

"Lucien and his companion, the convict, have been able to retain their positions before the world for a longer space than Coignard, by drawing their resources from the prostitution of the aforesaid Esther, a woman who has formerly been under police surveillance."

In spite of the repetition which these memoranda make in the recital of this drama, it was necessary to repeat them word for word in order to picture the methods of the police in Paris. The police has, as we have already seen when information

was demanded in regard to Peyrade, records, almost invariably exact, of all the families and all the individuals whose behavior is suspected and whose actions are reprehensible. The police does not allow a single deviation to pass unnoted. This universal scrap-book, this balance sheet of consciences, is as accurately kept as is the ledger of the Bank of France. In the same way that the bank marks the slightest delay in the dates of payment, weighs the credit of everybody with whom it deals, reckons the fortunes of capitalists and follows their speculations, just so the police watches over the honesty of citizens. Here, as at the palace, innocence has nothing to fear; watch is kept over sins alone. However distinguished a family may be, it can never be quite safe from this social providence. The discretion of this power equals its extent. This vast quantity of statements of police commissioners, of reports, memoranda, of certificates; this ocean of information sleeps motionless, deep and calm as the sea. But let some great occurrence happen, a misdemeanor or a crime take place, let justice appeal to the police, and instantly, if the records of the accused be on file, the judge takes notice of it. These records, wherein antecedents are analyzed, are not mere scraps of information which expire within the walls of the palace; justice can make no legal use of them, it employs them, it lights its way by them—that is all. These maps display, as it were, the reverse side of the embroidery of crimes and their original causes which

remain almost always unpublished. No jury would trust them, the whole country would rise in indignation if recognition were taken of them in the cross-examination of the Court of Assize. Thus, in a word, truth is condemned to dwell deep in its well, as is its fate everywhere and always. There is no magistrate who, after a dozen years of practice in Paris, does not know that the Court of Assizes and the Police Court conceal half of those infamous secrets which are like the bed on which crime has brooded over its purposes, and who does not admit that justice does not punish one half the crimes that are committed. If the public could know the lengths to which this discretion is carried by unforgetting agents of police, it would revere these worthy men side by side with the Cheverus. Men think the police crafty, Machiavelian; it is excessively benign; only, it listens to passions in their paroxysms; it receives secrets and it preserves its memoranda. It is terrible, but on one side. What it does for justice it does also for politics; but in politics it is as cruel and unjust as the fire of the Inquisition.

"So much for that," said the judge, replacing the memoranda in their envelope. "It is a secret between the police and law; the judge will know what it is worth; but M. and Madame Camusot have never known anything about it."

"Is it necessary to tell me that again?" said Madame Camusot.

"Lucien is guilty," continued the judge, "but of what?"

"A man loved by the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, by the Countess de Sérizy and by Clotilde de Grandlieu, is not guilty," replied Amélie; "the other *must* have done all."

"But Lucien is his accomplice!" exclaimed Camusot.

"Will you take my advice?" said Amélie. "Render up the priest to diplomacy, whose brightest ornament he is; acquit this poor wretch, and find others guilty."

"How you gallop!" answered the judge, smiling. "Women fly toward their ends across the bar of law like birds in the air, which stop at nothing."

"But," replied Amélie, "diplomat or convict, the Abbé Carlos will name somebody in order to extricate himself."

"I am but a cap, you are the head," said Camusot.

"Well, the council is over; come, kiss your Mélie, it is one o'clock."—

Madame Camusot went to bed, leaving her husband to put his papers and ideas in preparation for the examination which the two prisoners were to undergo on the following day.

While the salad baskets were bringing Jacques Collin and Lucien to the Conciergerie, the examining judge, after breakfast, walked through Paris afoot, in accordance with the simplicity of manners affected by Parisian magistrates, on his way to his office where the documents relating to the case were already collected. They had been brought in this way:

Every examining judge has a private secretary, a kind of judicial clerk under oath, whose race, perpetuated without bounties and without encouragement, produces admirable individuals; among whom silence is as natural as it is absolute. From the origin of parliaments until to-day there has never been an example of an indiscretion committed at the palace by one of these private clerks relating to criminal examinations. Gentil sold the receipt given by Louise of Savoy to Semblançay; a clerk in the war department sold to Czernichef the plan of the Russian campaign; both these traitors were more or less rich. The possibility of a situation in the palace or of a position as registrar, and the traditional conscience of their profession suffice to render the private secretary of an examining judge the successful rival of the grave, for since the progress in chemistry has reached its present development, even the grave has become indiscreet. This clerk is the very pen of the judge. Many people, perceiving that such a man might become the shaft of the machine, will ask one another how he can be satisfied to remain a simple nut; but the nut is content: perhaps it is afraid of the machine. Camusot's clerk, a young man of twenty-two, named Coquart, had come in the morning to collect all the judge's documents and memoranda, and he had already arranged everything in the office when the magistrate was strolling leisurely along the quays, looking at the curiosities in the shop windows and asking himself:

"How shall I go to work with a rascal as able as Jacques Collin, supposing that it is he? The chief of the secret service will recognize him; I must seem to know my business even if it be for the exclusive benefit of the police. I see so many impossibilities that the best way would be to enlighten the marchioness and the duchess, too, by showing them the memoranda of the police, and I could also revenge my father from whom Lucien enticed Coralie. By detecting such black villains I shall spread the fame of my cleverness abroad, and Lucien will soon be disowned by all his friends. The examination shall decide it."

He entered a curiosity shop, attracted by a Boulle clock.

"To be true to my conscience and yet to serve two noble ladies will certainly be a masterpiece of shrewdness," thought he. "What! are you here? Monsieur le Procureur-Général?" exclaimed Camusot aloud. "Are you looking for medals?"

"It's the taste of almost all justices," answered the Count de Granville, laughing, "on account of the reverses."

Then after having glanced about the shop for a few moments as if he were finishing his examination, he led Camusot away across the quai, so naturally that the latter could not suspect that his company was the result of anything but chance.

"You are going to examine M. de Rubempré this morning," remarked the attorney-general. "Poor fellow, I was fond of him."—

"There are heavy charges against him," said Camusot.

"Yes, I have seen the police memoranda; but they are due in part to an agent not connected with the Prefecture, the notorious Corentin, a man who has cut the throats of more innocent men than you have sent guilty men to the scaffold, and—but the fellow is entirely out of our province. Without wishing to influence the conscience of a magistrate such as you, I cannot help saying that if you can be certain of Lucien's ignorance in regard to this woman's testament, it would prove that he had no interest in her death, for she left him a prodigious amount of money."

"We have positive proof of his absence at the time of the poisoning of this Esther," said Camusot. "He was at Fontainebleau watching for the arrival of Mademoiselle de Grandlieu and of the Duchess de Lenoncourt."

"Oh," remarked the attorney-general, "he was so confident in regard to his marriage with Mademoiselle de Grandlieu—I have it from the Duchess de Grandlieu herself—that it is impossible to suppose that so clever a fellow as he would compromise everything by a useless crime."

"Yes," said Camusot, "above all if this Esther gave him all her earnings."

"Derville and Nucingen say that she died without hearing of the succession, which had been withheld from her for a long time," added the attorney-general.

"What do you think is the solution, then?" demanded Camusot, "for there is an answer."

"A crime committed by the servants," replied the attorney-general.

"Unhappily," remarked Camusot, "it is perfectly consistent with Jacques Collin's character, for, in all probability, the Spanish priest is this escaped convict, to make away with the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs realized by the sale of the three per cent bonds presented by Nucingen."

"You must weigh everything, my dear Camusot; be prudent. The Abbé Carlos Herrera is connected with diplomatic circles—but, should an ambassador commit a crime, he would not be protected by his position. Is he or is he not the Abbé Carlos Herrera? That is the most important question."—

And M. de Granville bowed like a man who does not wish an answer.

"So he too is anxious to save Lucien?" thought Camusot, as he made his way across the quai des Lunettes, while the attorney-general entered the Palais through the Cour de Harlay.

*

When he had reached the courtyard of the Conciergerie, Camusot went straight to the warden's house, and led its master to the middle of the sidewalk safe from every ear.

"My dear sir, be so kind as to go to the Force and learn of your colleague whether he is fortunate enough to possess at this present time any convicts who have been imprisoned at Toulon from 1810 to 1815; find out, also, whether you have any such persons yourself. We shall transfer those now at the Force to your command for a few days, and you will tell me whether the pseudo Spanish priest is recognized by them as Jacques Collin alias Trompe-la-Mort.'

"Certainly, Monsieur Camusot; but Bibi Lupin has arrived—"

"Ah, already!" exclaimed the judge.

"He was at Melun. When he heard that Trompe-la-Mort was in the case he smiled with delight, and now he waits your orders."

"Send him to me."

The warden of the Conciergerie had then an opportunity to tell the examining judge of Jacques Collin's petition, and to describe his deplorable condition.

"It was my intention to examine him first," answered the magistrate; "but not on account of his

health. This morning I received a note from the warden of the Force; but this fellow, who twenty-four hours ago was at the point of death, slept so well that the doctor, summoned by the warden, was able to enter his cell without arousing him; the doctor did not even feel his pulse, but let him sleep; this seems to prove that his conscience is as good as his health. I am not going to believe in this illness unless it be to study my man's game," said M. Camusot smiling.

"We have a daily opportunity for that with the *prévenus* and the *accusés,*" observed the warden of the Conciergerie.

The Prefecture of Police is connected with the Conciergerie, and the magistrates, as well as the warden of the prison, can appear there with extraordinary promptness by means of their acquaintance with subterranean passages. This is the explanation of the miraculous facility with which the general ministry and the presidents of the Courts of Assizes can, during session, secure certain pieces of information. Thus, when M. Camusot had reached the head of the staircase leading to his office, he came upon Bibi Lupin, who had hastened thither through the Salle des pas Perdus.

"What zeal!" said the judge with a smile.

"Ah! that's because, if it is *he,*" answered the chief of the secret service, "you will see a terrible dance in the yard, though there are but few of these *runaway horses.*—A slang expression for former convicts.—

"Why?"

"Trompe-la-Mort has gobbled their cash and I know that *they* have sworn to do away with him."

"They," signified the convicts whose savings, entrusted for twenty years to Trompe-la-Mort, had been squandered on Lucien as the reader knows.

"Could you find the witnesses of the last arrest?"

"Give me two summons for witnesses, and I will procure them for you to-day."

"Coquart," said the judge, taking off his gloves and placing his hat and cane in a corner, "make out two summonses according to the agent's directions."

He looked at his picture in the glass over the fireplace. On the mantel-piece in place of a clock stood a basin and water pitcher, on one side of this was a carafe full of water and a glass, and on the other a lamp. The judge rang; after a few minutes the usher appeared.

"Is there anybody waiting to see me?" asked he of the usher, whose duty it was to receive witnesses, to verify their summons and to arrange them in order of their arrival.

"Yes, sir."

"Take the names of all who have come; bring me the list."

Examining judges, avaricious of their time, are sometimes obliged to conduct several examinations at once. This is the explanation of the long line which the witnesses form when they are summoned into an apartment, where ushers are standing about

and gongs of the examining judges are continually ringing.

"Now," said Camusot to his usher, "find Abbé Carlos Herrera for me."

"Ah! He represents himself as Spanish and a priest? So they have told me. It's Collet over again, Monsieur Camusot," exclaimed the chief of the secret service.

"There is nothing new," replied Camusot.

The judge signed two of those formidable summons which make even the most innocent witness anxious when justice commands him thus to appear, under severe penalties in case of refusal.

About half an hour before this time Jacques Collin had completed his profound deliberation, and he was resting on his arms. Nothing can more graphically describe this figure of the people in rebellion against the law than the few lines which he had traced upon his greasy papers.

The meaning of the first ran as follows, for it was written in the language agreed upon between himself and Asia, the slang of slang, the cipher applied to the idea:

"Go to the Duchess de Maufrigneuse or to Madame de Sérizy; see that one or the other interviews Lucien before his examination, and gives him the paper herein enclosed to read. Then Europe and Paccard must be found, in order that both thieves be at my orders and ready to play the part I shall assign to them.

"Hasten to Rastignac, tell him on the part of the man whom he met at a ball at the Opera, to come and bear witness that Carlos Herrera resembles in no particular the Jacques Collin arrested at the house of Madame Vauquer.

"Tell Doctor Bianchon to do likewise.

"Make Lucien's *two wives* work toward the same end."

On the enclosed paper these lines were written in good French:

"Lucien, confess nothing about me. I must be for you the Abbé Carlos Herrera. Not only is this your justification, but, a little more courage and you shall have seven millions, and your honor safe in the bargain."

These two papers glued on the side of the writing in such a way as to appear like a single fragment of the same leaf, were rolled with an art peculiar to those who have pondered in prison over the means of becoming free. The whole assumed the form and consistency of some round particle of grease, large as are those waxen heads which economical women fasten to needles that have lost their eyes.

"If it is my turn to go to the examination first, we are saved; but if it is the boy's, all is lost," thought he as he waited.

This brief delay was so cruel that, redoubtable

as he was, Carlos felt the cold sweat start out upon his forehead. This extraordinary person divined as truly in his sphere of crime as Molière divined in the sphere of dramatic poetry, or as Cuvier concerning creations that have disappeared. In all its forms, genius is an intuition. Below this phenomenon the remainder of remarkable works owe their accomplishment to talent. Herein lies the difference which separates persons of the first from persons of the second rank. Crime has its men of genius. Jacques Collin, at bay, was allied with the ambitious Madame Camusot, and with Madame de Sérizy, in whom love had reawakened beneath the blow of the terrible catastrophe which had engulfed Lucien. Such was the supreme effort of human intelligence against the steel armor of the law.

As he heard the grating of the heavy iron locks and bolts of his door, Jacques Collin assumed once more the appearance of a dying man; he was aided in this effort by the intoxicating sensation of joy which came over him as he heard the squeaking of the turnkey's shoes in the corridor. Ignorant of the means by which Asia would succeed in reaching him, he counted upon seeing her near his path, above all after the promise which he had received at the Arcade Saint Jean.

After that fortunate encounter, Asia had made her way down to the Grève. Before 1830 the name of Grève had a meaning which is now lost. All that portion of the quai from the Pont d'Arcole as far as the Pont Louis Philippe was then just as

nature had made it, with the exception of a paved walk that slanted to one side. Thus at flood tide boats could ply past the houses and along the streets which sloped toward the river. On this quai the ground floors of the houses were almost all raised to the height of a few steps above the level of the street. When the water splashed against the foundation of the houses carriages made a détour by the abominable rue de la Mortellerie, now entirely abolished to enlarge the Hôtel de Ville. It was then an easy matter for the sham peddler to push her little cart rapidly to the foot of the quai, and to leave it there until the true owner, who was at this time drinking the proceeds of her wholesale bargain in one of the dirty pot houses of the rue de la Mortellerie, should come to find it at the spot where Asia had promised to leave it. At this time workmen happened to be finishing the addition to the Quai Pelletier. The entrance to the workshed was guarded by a disabled soldier, and the cart entrusted to his care ran no risk.

Asia instantly took a cab on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, and said to the driver:

"To the Temple, hurry, *there's grease to be had.*"

A woman dressed like Asia could, without exciting the least curiosity, disappear within the vast market where are heaped all the rags of Paris, where a thousand hawkers swarm and hundreds of old-clothes women chatter the praises of their wares. The two prisoners were scarcely registered when Asia was busy changing her costume in a small, damp, low

entresol, situated above one of those vile shops where seamstresses and tailors sell remnants of stolen cloth, kept by an old hag called La Romette, from her christian name of Jérômette. La Romette was to women of Asia's occupation exactly what *Madame Resources* themselves are to those women who are styled *fashionable* when they have run into debt—a lender of money at a hundred per cent.

"Now, old girl," said Asia, "I want to be *rigged up.* I must be a baroness of the Faubourg Saint Germain at the least. Hurry it up," continued she; "*I'm walking on tacks.* You know what gowns become me. First of all rouge; pick me out some of your best laces, and out with your shiniest jewels —send your little girl to hail a cab, and have the driver stop at our back door."

"Yes, madame," replied the old woman, with the submission and alacrity of a servant in the presence of her mistress.

Had there been a witness of this scene, he would have seen at once that the woman hidden beneath the name of Asia was quite at home.

"I have an offer of diamonds—" said La Romette as she arranged Asia's hair.

"Stolen?"

"I think so."

"You must go without, my child, whatever the profit. We have *old curiosity* to fear for sometime to come."

The reader can now understand how Asia was able to be in the Salle des pas Perdus of the Palais

de Justice with a summons in her hand and an usher to guide her through the corridors and up the stairways which lead to the offices of the examining judges, and finally to ask for M. Camusot full fifteen minutes before the arrival of the judge.

Asia no longer bore any resemblance to herself. After having washed her wrinkled face like an actress, and painted it with red and white, she had covered her head with an admirable blond wig. Dressed precisely like some lady from the Faubourg Saint Germain in quest of her lost dog she looked forty years old, for she had concealed her face beneath a magnificent veil of black lace. Tightly laced stays compressed her huge waist. Neatly gloved, and provided with rather a large bustle, she exhaled an odor of powder à la maréchale. While her hands played with a gold-mounted reticule, she divided her attention between the walls of the palais, to which this was evidently her first visit, and the leash of a pretty King Charles' spaniel. Such a dowager did not go long unnoticed by the black-robed population of the Salle de pas Perdus.

Beside the briefless barristers, who sweep the Salle de pas Perdus with their long gowns and call famous lawyers by their Christian names to one another, after the fashion of grand seigneurs, in order to pretend that they too belong to the aristocracy of their profession, there are often to be seen patient young men at the beck and call of solicitors, who dance attendance for the sake of a single case in which they may be retained as second counsel and

thus obtain some possible chance to plead in case the lawyers retained as first counsel happen to be delayed. That would be a curious picture which should portray the differences between the black gowns as they pace up and down the vast hall by threes, and occasionally by fours, while the buzz of their conversations echoes through this hall, so aptly named, for walking wears lawyers out as well as the unbounded measure of their speech; but this description will find a place in the study destined to depict the lawyers of Paris. Asia had calculated upon the idlers of the palace; she laughed in her sleeve at the pleasantries which she overheard, and finally succeeded in attracting the attention of Massol, a young licentiate in law more interested in the *Gazette des Tribunaux* than in his clients, who smilingly placed his services at the disposal of a woman so perfumed, so sweetly and so richly dressed.

Asia assumed a little shrill voice to explain to this obliging gentleman that she had come in accordance with the summons of a judge named Camusot.—

"Ah! for the Rubempré case."

The case already had its name!

"Oh! it's not I, but my maid, a girl surnamed Europe, who has been in my service twenty-four hours, and who fled the moment that she saw my butler bring me this stamped paper."

Then like all old women, whose lives are passed in gossiping about the hearth, encouraged by Massol, she dilated upon all sorts of wholly foreign subjects; she told of her unhappiness with her first

husband, one of the three directors of the Treasury of the Interior; she consulted the young lawyer on the question of a possible suit against her son-in-law, the Count de Gross-Narp, who was making her daughter very unhappy, and as to whether the law allowed him to dispose of her fortune. Massol, for all his efforts, could not discover whether the summons had been served upon the mistress or the maid. At the outset he had contented himself with glancing at the judicial paper, samples of which are so frequently to be seen; since, for the sake of greater haste, they are printed, and the clerks and examining judges have only to fill out the blanks left vacant for the names and addresses of witnesses, the hour of their appearance, etc. Asia questioned Massol on the geography of the palace, which she knew better than the lawyer himself, and concluded by asking of him at what time M. Camusot was expected.

"As a general thing, examining judges began their interrogation toward ten o'clock."

"It is a quarter before ten," said she, looking at a charming little watch, a masterpiece of the jeweler's art, which made Massol think, "Where the devil will fortune perch at last!"

At this moment Asia had reached that dark hall opening upon the courtyard of the Conciergerie, where the ushers are in waiting. Perceiving the wicket gate through the window, she exclaimed:

"What are those enormous walls?"

"That is the Conciergerie."

"Ah! that's the Conciergerie where our poor queen—Oh! how I should like to see her cell!"

"It is impossible, your ladyship," replied the lawyer, who had given his arm to the counterfeit dowager; "you must have a permit, and that is difficult to obtain."

"I am told," continued she, "that Louis XVIII. wrote the Latin inscription which is placed in Marie Antoinette's cell with his own hand."

"Yes, your ladyship."

"I should like to know Latin in order to study the words of that inscription," replied she.

"Do you think that M. Camusot could give me a permit?"

"He has nothing to do with that; but he might accompany you—"

"But his examinations?" said she.

"Oh!" replied Massol, "the prisoners can wait."

"Ah! they are prisoners, it is true," replied Asia, naïvely. "But I know M. de Granville, your attorney-general."

This bit of information produced a magical effect upon the ushers and upon the lawyer.

"Ah! you know the attorney-general?" said Massol, who was considering a request for the name and address of the client whom chance had brought him.

"I see him often at the house of his friend, M. de Sérizy. Madame de Sérizy is a relative of mine through the Ronquerolles."

"But if madame cares to visit the Conciergerie," said an usher, "she—"

"Yes," said Massol.

And the ushers made way for the lawyer and the baroness, who descended the stairs to the small prison yard, from one end of which rises the stairway of the Souricière, a spot well known to Asia, which forms, as we have seen, a post of observation between the Souricière and the sixth chamber, before which everybody is obliged to pass.

"Ask those men whether M. Camusot has come," said she, pointing toward several gendarmes playing at cards.

"Yes, madame, he has just gone into the Souricière."

"The Souricière!" said she. "Which is that? Oh! how stupid I was not to go straight to the Count de Granville. But I have no time. Please take me to M. Camusot, so that I may speak with him before he is engaged.

"Oh! madame, you have plenty of time to speak with M. Camusot," said Massol. "If you will send him your card, he will spare you any disagreeable delay in the ante-room with the witnesses. At the palace ladies such as you do not go unheeded. You have your cards?"

At this juncture Asia and her barrister were standing exactly opposite the window of the guardhouse, whence the gendarmes could watch any movement of the wicket of the Conciergerie. The gendarmes, trained in the respect due to the defenders of the widow and the orphan, and knowing well the privileges of the gown, tolerated for a few moments the

presence of a baroness escorted by a barrister. Asia encouraged the young barrister to tell her all the dreadful things that a young barrister can say about a wicket. She refused to believe that prisoners were dressed for the scaffold behind the grating which was pointed out to her; but the brigadier of gendarmes corroborated this statement.

"How I should like to see that!" said she.

There she stayed chatting with the brigadier and her barrister until the moment that she caught sight of Jacques Collin, supported by two gendarmes and preceded by M. Camusot's usher, coming out from the wicket.

"Ah! There's the prison chaplain who has no doubt been preparing some poor wretch—"

"No, no, your ladyship," replied the gendarme; "it's a *prévenu* on his way to examination."

"What is the charge against him?"

"He's implicated in this poisoning case—"

"Oh! I should so like to see him!"

"You cannot remain here," said the brigadier, "for he is in solitary confinement and he is coming directly across this guard room. This door, madame, opens upon the stairway.—"

"Thanks, sir," said the baroness, as she turned toward the door and sprang toward the stairway, where she cried out:—"Why, where am I?"

Her cry reached the ears of Jacques Collin, whom she had purposed to prepare thus for her appearance. The brigadier dashed after the baroness, seized her by the waist, and bore her, like a feather, to the midst

of the five gendarmes, who sprang to their feet like a single man; for in the guard house nothing is unsuspected. It was an arbitrary measure, but it was necessary. The barrister himself had uttered two exclamations, "madame! madame!" in a tone full of alarm, so great was his fear lest he should compromise himself.

The Abbé Carlos Herrera sank almost senseless upon a chair in the guard room.

"Poor man!" said the baroness. "Is he guilty?"

These words, although they were spoken in the ear of the young barrister, were heard by everybody, for in this dreadful guard room there reigned the silence of death. Some few exceptional persons obtain the occasional privilege of seeing notorious criminals as they pass through the guard room or the lobbies so that the usher and the gendarmes charged with conducting the Abbé Carlos Herrera paid no heed to Asia's presence. Besides, thanks to the prompt action of the brigadier, who had seized the baroness in order to prevent any possible communication between the *prévenu* and the strangers, the prisoner was still at a very safe distance.

"Let us proceed!" said Jacques Collin, making an effort to rise.

At this instant the tiny ball fell from his sleeve, and the spot where it dropped was noted by the baroness, whose eyes, protected by her veil, were left at liberty. The moist and greasy paper did not roll; for these small details, apparently unthought of, had all been calculated by Jacques Collin in

order to make the success of his stratagem complete. When the prisoner had been led up the stairs, Asia dropped her reticule quite naturally, and picked it up slowly; but as she stooped over she had picked up the ball, which, from its color, absolutely like that of the dust and mud of the wooden floor, was invisible.

"Ah!" said she, "that breaks my heart!—He is dying."

"Or he seems so," replied the brigadier.

"Sir," said Asia to the lawyer, "show me the way, at once, to M. Camusot; this very trial is my reason for coming—and perhaps he will be glad to have seen me before examining the poor priest."

The barrister and the baroness left the guard room, with its greasy and smoke-stained walls; but when they had reached the top of the staircase, Asia suddenly cried out:

"My dog? Oh, sir; my poor dog!" and like a mad woman she darted into the Salle des pas Perdus, asking everybody for tidings of her dog. She reached the Galerie Marchande and dashed toward a staircase, saying:

"There he is!"

This staircase was that which led to the Cour de Harlay, and now that her comedy was played, Asia rushed through the court, jumped into one of the cabs which stood on the quai des Orféveres, and disappeared with the summons to appear directed against Europe, whose real name was still unknown to the police and to justice.

"Rue Neuve Saint Marc," she cried to the driver.

*

Asia could count upon the inviolable discretion of a certain dealer in old clothes, called Madame Nourrisson, known likewise under the name of Madame de Saint-Estève, who had lent her not only her personality but even her shop, where Nucingen had haggled for the delivery of Esther. In this shop Asia was completely at home, for she occupied a room in Madame Nourrisson's dwelling. She paid her fare and went up to her room, after nodding to Madame Nourrisson hastily, to show her that there was no time for words.

Once safe from all danger of detection, Asia began to unfold the papers with the scrupulous care of scholars unrolling palimpsests. After reading the instructions, she judged it necessary to transcribe upon note paper the lines destined for Lucien; then she went downstairs to the shop and talked with Madame Nourrisson, while a little shop girl went to the Boulevard des Italiens to secure a cab. Asia then procured the addresses of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse and of Madame de Sérizy, with which Madame Nourrisson was familiar through her relations with their chambermaids.

These diverse proceedings, these minute occupations employed more than two hours. Madame la Duchess de Maufrigneuse, who lived in the upper part of the Faubourg Saint Honoré, kept Madame

de Saint-Estève waiting for a whole hour, although the maid, after knocking at her mistress' door, had sent in Madame de Saint-Estève's card on which Asia had written, *"Come on most urgent business regarding Lucien."*

At the first glance which she cast at the duchess' face, Asia understood that her visit was most inopportune; thus she excused herself for having disturbed her ladyship's repose, pleading in her defence the imminent danger in which Lucien stood.—

"Who are you?" demanded the duchess, without any expression of politeness, as she stared at Asia, who might easily be taken for a baroness by Master Massol in the Salle des pas Perdus, but who, as she trod the carpet of the little parlor of the Hôtel de Cadignan, produced an effect not unlike a spot of carriage grease upon a white satin gown.

"I am a tradeswoman, your ladyship, and I deal in second-hand clothes; for at such a juncture as this people address themselves to women whose business rests upon absolute discretion. I have never betrayed a soul, and God knows how many noble ladies have confided their diamonds to me for a month and secured in return counterfeit ornaments precisely like—"

"You have another name?" said the duchess, smiling at a reminiscence which this response called to her mind.

"Yes, your ladyship, on great occasions I become Madame de Saint-Estève, but in business my name is Madame Nourrisson."

"Good!" answered the duchess quickly, changing her tone.

"I am able," continued Asia, "to render great services, for we keep husband's secrets as well as those of wives. I have frequently done business with M. de Marsay, whom your ladyship—"

"Enough! enough!" exclaimed the duchess; "let us think about Lucien."

"If your ladyship wishes to save him you must be brave enough to lose no time in dressing; besides, your ladyship could not be handsomer than she is at this moment. On the word of an old woman, you are pretty enough to eat! Don't have your horses harnessed, madame, but get into my cab with me. Come to Madame de Sérizy, if you would avoid greater misfortune than death of this cherub—"

"Go on, I follow," said the duchess after a moment's hesitation; "we two shall encourage Léontine—"

In spite of the truly devilish activity of this Dorine of prisons, the clock was striking two when Asia, accompanied by the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, entered the house of Madame de Sérizy, who lived in the rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin. But there, thanks to the duchess, not an instant was lost. Both women were immediately introduced into the presence of the countess, whom they discovered reclining upon a divan under a miniature chalet, in the midst of a garden perfumed with the rarest flowers.

"It is well," said Asia, glancing about her, "we cannot be overheard."

"Ah! my dearest, I am dying. Diane, what have you done?" cried the countess, springing forward like a fawn and bursting into tears as she threw her arms about the duchess' shoulders.

"Courage, Léontine, there are seasons when women, like you and me, should not weep but act," said the duchess, forcing the countess to sit down beside her on the couch.

Asia studied the countess with that look peculiar to women grown old in cunning, with which they search another's soul, with the swiftness of a surgeon's knife probing a wound. The companion of Jacques Collin could discern traces of the rarest sentiment known to a worldly woman, true sorrow! That sorrow which ploughs upon both heart and face furrows which cannot be effaced. There was not a trace of coquetry in her attire. The countess had seen forty-five summers; her loose gown of printed muslin was rumpled and showed no mark of care! She was without stays; her eyes encircled by black rings, her stained cheeks bore witness of bitter tears; her waist was bound by no girdle; the embroidery of her petticoat was worn; her hair, caught up beneath a lace cap untouched by comb for twenty-four hours, was woven into a short light braid, while a few curly wisps appeared in all their bareness. Léontine had forgotten to put on her false braids.

"You love for the first time in your life," said Asia, sententiously.

Léontine noticed Asia, and made a startled gesture.

"Who is that, dear Diane?" said she to the Duchess de Maufrigneuse.

"Whom do you suppose that I would bring you if she were not a woman devoted to Lucien and ready to serve us?"

Asia had divined the truth. Madame de Sérizy, who passed for one of the most fickle of worldly women, had once felt for the Marquis d'Aiglemont an attachment that had lasted for ten years. Since the marquis' departure for the colonies, she had become wildly in love with Lucien, and had torn him away from the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, ignorant, as was all Paris at that time, of Lucien's love for Esther. In the best society, a single authentic attachment hurts a woman's reputation more than ten obscure intrigues; and two such attachments wound her good name in full proportion. Nevertheless, as Madame de Sérizy cared nothing for what people say, her biographer might guarantee her virtue with the slight exception of a blemish or two. She was a blond of middle height, preserved like blonds who are preserved, that is to say looking scarcely thirty, slender without thinness, pale with ash-colored hair; her feet, hands and figure were of an aristocratic delicacy. As a Ronquerolles she was witty, and in consequence as displeasing to women as she was attractive to men. Through her vast fortune and through the distinguished positions of her husband and of her brother, the Marquis de Ronquerolles, she had always been sheltered from the mortifications which would doubtless have

overwhelmed another woman in her position. She had one great merit: she was candid in regard to her vices, and openly avowed her taste for the manners of the Regency. This woman, now forty-two years old, had hitherto only considered men as amusing toys, though, strange to say, she had granted them much, thinking that in love you have to submit, to ultimately conquer, but at the mere sight of Lucien, she was seized with love similar to Baron Nucingen's for Esther. She had then loved, as Asia had just told her, for the first time in her life. These transpositions of youth are more common than is supposed among women in Paris in the highest circle of society, and cause inexplicable falls of virtuous women at the moment they reach the harbor of forty years. The Duchess de Maufrigneuse was the sole confidant of this terrible and consummate passion, whose joys, from the infantine sensations of first love to the indulgence of unbounded pleasure, made Léontine mad and insatiate.

True love, as everybody knows, is pitiless. The discovery of an Esther had been followed by one of those angry ruptures in which woman's rage does not shrink from murder; then came the stage of cowardice to which sincere love surrenders with sweet delight. Thus, for a month past the countess would have given ten years of her life to see Lucien but for a week. In a word, she had come to accept the rivalry of Esther at the moment when, in this paroxysm of tenderness, the news of her lover's arrest had burst upon her like the trumpet call of

the last judgment. The countess had been near to death; her husband, fearing the revelations of delirium had himself kept watch over her bedside; and for twenty-four hours she had been living with a dagger at her heart. In the heat of fever, she cried aloud to her husband:

"Save Lucien; and henceforth I will live for you alone."

"It's of no use to cry your eyes out, as her ladyship, the duchess, says," exclaimed the terrible Asia, seizing the countess by the arm. "If you wish to save him there's not an instant to lose. He is innocent, I swear it on my mother's bones."

"Yes, yes, is he not innocent?" cried the countess looking kindly into Asia's hideous face.

"But," said Asia, continuing, "if M. Camusot makes *a bad examination* he can condemn Lucien by a word; and if you have the power to open the doors of the Conciergerie and speak with him, go this instant and give him this letter.—To-morrow he shall be free, I swear it. You must rescue him, for it was you that drove him to his fate."

"I?"

"Yes, you! You noble ladies never have a penny, though you have your millions. The ragamuffins who made love to me used to have their pockets full of money. I liked to see them happy. It's pleasant to be mother and mistress at once. You let the men who love you starve like dogs, and never trouble yourself to ask about them. Esther had no fine words, but at the price of her body and

her soul she gave the million which they demanded of your Lucien, and that is what has driven him to the place where he is."

"Poor girl! Did she do that? I love her—" said Léontine.

"Ah! now—" said Asia with cold irony.

"She was very beautiful, but now, my angel, you are far more beautiful than she; and Lucien's marriage with Clotilde is broken past mending," whispered the duchess to Léontine.

The effect of this reflection and calculation was so strong that the countess ceased to suffer; she passed her hand over her forehead; she was young again.

"Come, my pet; off with you, hurry!" said Asia, who saw this metamorphosis and divined its power.

"But," said Madame de Maufrigneuse, "first of all we must prevent M. Camusot from examining Lucien; we can write him a line and send it to the palace by your valet, Léontine."

"Come into my room," said Madame de Sérizy.

Let us find out what was going on at the palace while Lucien's protectresses were carrying out the orders written by Jacques Collin.

The gendarmes carried the dying man in a chair and placed him directly opposite the window of the office of M. Camusot, who was sitting in an arm chair before his desk. Coquart, pen in hand, bent over a small table a few feet from the judge.

The situation of the officers of examining judges is not a matter of indifference, and if it has not been chosen with foresight, we must admit that chance has treated justice like a sister. Like painters, these magistrates need the pure and uniform light which comes from the north, for the faces of their criminals are pictures which need the most careful study. Thus almost all examining judges place their desks in the position chosen by Camusot; so that their backs are turned toward the window while the faces of those whom they examine are exposed to the full glare of the light. There is not one of them who, after six months' practice, neglects to assume a careless absent-minded expression whenever his spectacles are off his nose, so long as the examination lasts. It was to a sudden change of countenance, observed by this method and caused by a question asked point-blank, that was owed the discovery of a crime committed by Castaing at the very moment when, after a long consultation with the attorney-general, the judge was about to release this deep offender against society in default of proof. This detail may explain to persons of the smallest comprehension how animated, interesting, curious, dramatic and terrible is the struggle of a criminal examination, a struggle without witnesses but always written down. God knows what remains on paper of this frigid yet burning scene, in which the eyes, the accent, a tremor of the face, the slightest tinge of color rising at a thought, are as perilous as they are among savages who scrutinize

one another to discover secrets and to murder. The written report is but the ashes of the conflagration.

"What is your real name?" demanded Camusot of Jacques Collin.

"Don Carlos Herrera, canon of the royal chapter of Toledo, secret envoy of His Majesty, Ferdinand VII."

We must mention here that Jacques Collin was speaking a vile jargon of Spanish and French, mutilating the latter to such a degree that his answers were almost unintelligible, and had to be repeated at the judge's request. The Germanisms of M. de Nucingen have already been strewn too thickly through this book to allow us to add other dialects which are difficult to read, and delay the unraveling of the plot.

"You have papers which support your affirmation?" inquired the judge.

"Yes, your honor, a passport, a letter from His Catholic Majesty authorizing my mission.—In short, you can send at once to the Spanish Embassy a line which I shall write in your presence; my testimony will be corroborated. Then, if you require more proofs, I will write to His Eminence, the Grand Almoner of France, and he will dispatch his private secretary hither immediately."

"You still maintain that you are dying?" said Camusot. "If you had really experienced the suffering of which you have complained you would

certainly have died before this,'' added the judge ironically.

''You regulate the trial according to the courage of an innocent man and to the strength of his constitution!'' answered the *prévenu* with gentleness.

''Coquart, ring! Send for the doctor of the Conciergerie and his assistant.—We shall be obliged to remove your coat and proceed to the verification of the mark upon your shoulder,'' continued Camusot.

''I am in your honor's hands.''

The prisoner asked if the judge would have the goodness to explain to him what this mark was and why they sought for it upon his shoulder. The judge was expecting this question.

''You are suspected of being Jacques Collin, an escaped convict, whose audacity recoils before nothing, not even sacrilege!—'' said the judge suddenly, darting his glance into the prisoner's eyes. Jacques Collin did not tremble, his color did not change; he sat quite calm, and his face assumed an expression of ingenuous curiosity as he stared at Camusot.

''I, a convict, your honor? May the order to which I belong, and may God pardon you for such an error! Tell me everything that I must do to prevent you from persisting in so serious an insult to the rights of man, to the Church, and to the King, my Master.''

Without returning a direct answer, the judge explained to the prisoner that if he had undergone the branding inflicted by law upon the shoulders

of criminals condemned to hard labor, a few blows would make the letters immediately reappear.

"Ah! sir!" said Jacques Collin, "it would be hard if my devotion to the royal cause were to be the cause of my ruin."

"Explain yourself," said the judge; "that is the reason why you are here."

"I will, your honor. I must have many a scar on my back, for I have been fusilladed from behind as a traitor to my country, because I was faithful to my king, by the Constitutionals who left me for dead."

"You have been shot by a file of soldiers and yet you are alive!" said Camusot.

"I had some understanding with the soldiers, who had received money from several pious persons; and thus they placed me so far away that the bullets were almost spent when they struck me; the soldiers aimed at my back. It is a fact to which His Excellency, the Ambassador, can bear witness—"

"This devilish man has an answer for everything. So much the better," thought Camusot, who did not appear more severe than was necessary to satisfy the demands of justice and of the police. "How is it that a man of your cloth," said the judge addressing the convict, "is found in the house of Baron de Nucingen's mistress;—and of such a mistress as she, a former prostitute."

"This is the reason why they found me in the house of a courtesan, your honor," replied Jacques

Collin. "But before telling you my motive in going there I ought to observe that at the instant that I stepped upon the staircase I was seized by the sudden attack of my illness; thus I did not even have time to speak to the woman. I had had information of Mademoiselle Esther's intended suicide and since this concerned the interests of young Lucien de Rubempré, for whom I have a peculiar affection, the motives of which are sacred, I was going to attempt to lead the poor creature from the path down which despair was hurrying her; I wished to tell her that Lucien was certain to fail in his last attempt to win Mademoiselle Clotilde; and by telling her that she was the heiress of seven millions, I hoped to give her courage to live. I am certain, sir, that I have been the victim of the secrets confided to me. By the manner in which I was struck down, I believe that I had been poisoned that very morning, but the strength of my constitution has saved me. I know that for some time past an agent of the political police has been following me, seeking to entrap me in some wicked snare.—If, upon my request after my arrest, you had summoned a physician you would have had proof of what I tell you now in regard to the state of my health. Believe me, sir, that persons in high authority have extraordinary interests in confounding me with some rascal in order to find a legal method of getting rid of me. To serve kings is not wholly gain; they have their littlenesses. The Church alone is perfect."

It is impossible to describe the play of Jacques

Collin's features as he spent, intentionally, ten minutes in enunciating this tirade, phrase by phrase; the whole was so credible, above all the allusion to Corentin, that the judge's conviction was shaken.

"Can you confide to me the reasons of your affection for M. Lucien de Rubempré?"

"Cannot you guess? I am sixty years old, your honor.—I implore you not to write it—it is—must I tell—unavoidably?"

"It is for your interest, and above all for the interest of M. de Rubempré to tell everything," answered the judge.

"Then, it is—oh, my God!—He is my son!" added the priest with an effort.

He fainted.

"Don't write that, Coquart," said Camusot in a whisper.

Coquart rose to get a small vial of strong vinegar.

"If this is Jacques Collin, he is a truly great actor!" thought Camusot.

Coquart put the vinegar below the nostrils of the ex-convict, while the judge looked on with all the acuteness of a lynx and a magistrate.

"His wig must be taken off," said Camusot, waiting until Jacques Collin should recover his senses.

The old convict heard these words and shivered with terror, for he well knew the base expression which his countenance would assume.

"If you have not strength to remove your wig—

yes, Coquart, take it off," said the judge to his secretary.

Jacques Collin bent his head toward the secretary with admirable resignation; but once deprived of its covering his head was horrible to see, its real character was imprinted upon it. This spectacle plunged Camusot once again into great uncertainty. While he waited for the doctor and his assistant he began to classify and examine all the papers and objects which had been seized in Lucien's dwelling. After the law had done its work in the rue Saint Georges at Madame Esther's house, it had descended upon the quai Malaquais to finish its search.

"You have laid hands upon the letters of the Countess de Sérizy," said Carlos Herrera; "but I do not know why you have almost all Lucien's papers," added he, with a smile of withering irony directed at the judge.

As Camusot perceived the smile, he understood the meaning of the word *almost!*

"Lucien de Rubempré, suspected of being your accomplice, is under arrest," answered he, wishing to see what effect this news would have upon the *prévenu.*

"You have done a great evil, for he is as innocent as I," replied the pretended Spaniard without showing the least emotion.

"We shall see. As yet we have not got beyond the question of your identity," answered Camusot, surprised by the prisoner's tranquillity. "If you

are really Don Carlos Herrera, the proof of this would at once alter the situation of Lucien Chardon."

"Yes, she was Madame Chardon, Mademoiselle de Rubempré!" murmured Carlos. "Ah, it was one of the blackest sins of my life!"

He raised his eyes toward heaven, and by the way in which his lips moved, he seemed to be uttering a fervent prayer.

"But if you are Jacques Collin; if he has been wilfully the accomplice of an escaped convict, the partner of a sacrilege, all the crimes which the law suspects become more than probable."

Herrera sat like a statue of bronze during the judge's cleverly conceived speech, and for all answer to the words: *wilfully, escaped convict,* he raised his hands with a gesture of noble sorrow.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," the judge continued, with excessive politeness, "if you are Don Carlos Herrera, you will pardon us for everything that we are obliged to do in the interests of truth and justice—"

Jacques Collin discerned a trap by the mere tone in which the judge pronounced the words *Monsieur l'Abbé*; his face remained unchanged. Camusot expected a movement of joy which would have been the first indication of the convict's character. The visible sign of the unspeakable delight which the criminal feels in deceiving his judge, but he found this hero of crime resting upon the arms of the most machiavelian dissimulation.

"I am a diplomat, and I belong to an order whose vows are very severe," replied Jacques Collin, with apostolic gentleness; "I understand everything and I am accustomed to suffering. I should already have been free, had you discovered in my room the hiding place in which my papers are; for I see that you have taken only the most insignificant."

This was the finishing stroke for Camusot; Jacques Collin had already counter-balanced, by his ease and simplicity, every suspicion which the appearence of his bared head had aroused.

"Where are these papers?"

"I will tell you, if you will have your messenger accompanied by a secretary of legation from the Spanish embassy, who will take them and make answer to you of their contents; my own official position is at stake, as well as diplomatic documents and secrets which would compromise the late King Louis XVIII.—Ah! your honor, it would be better —but you are a magistrate!—besides, the Ambassador to whom I appeal in this whole matter will understand."

At this moment the physician and his assistant entered, after having been announced by the usher.

"How do you do, Monsieur Lebrun," said Camusot to the doctor; "I need your assistance in order to ascertain the physical condition of this prisoner. He affirms that he has been poisoned, and that two days ago he was at death's door; see whether there

is danger in undressing him, and proceeding to verify the mark."

Doctor Lebrun took Jacques Collin's hand, felt his pulse, asked him to show his tongue, and looked at him very intently. This inspection lasted ten minutes.

"The prisoner," answered the doctor, "has suffered much, but at this moment he enjoys great strength."

"This artificial strength is due, monsieur, to the nervous excitement resulting from my strange situation," replied Jacques Collin with the ecclesiastical dignity of a bishop.—

"That may be," said M. Lebrun.

At a sign from the judge the prisoner was undressed. His trousers were not removed, but he was stripped even of his shirt; so that the company could admire a hairy torso of cyclopean strength. It was the Farnese Hercules of Naples without his colossal exaggeration.

"For what purpose does nature destine men built thus?" said the doctor to Camusot.

The usher returned with that species of ebony mallet, which since time immemorial has been the symbol of the operation we are about to describe, and which is called a rod. With this implement the usher struck several blows upon the spot where the executioner had applied the fatal letters. Seventeen holes then reappeared, but so capriciously distributed that, in spite of the care with which the back was examined, no trace of letters could be

found. The usher, alone, discerned the cross-bar of a T, indicated by two holes forming the down strokes at either end, while another hole marked the base of the letter.

"Yet, this is very uncertain," said Camusot, as he saw doubt painted upon the face of the physician.

Carlos demanded that the same operation should be made upon the other shoulder and upon the middle of his back. Some fifteen other scars appeared, which were examined, at the Spaniard's request, and the doctor then stated that the back had been so deeply furrowed by scars that it was impossible for the *mark* to be discernable, even if it had been actually branded by the executioner.

At this moment an official messenger from the Prefecture of Police entered, and presenting a sealed note to M. Camusot, asked for an answer. When he had read the contents the magistrate whispered to Coquart, but so low that not a syllable could be overheard; yet by a glance at Camusot, Jacques Collin divined that some information concerning him had been forwarded by the Prefect of Police.

That friend of Peyrade's is always on my heels," thought Jacques Collin; "if I knew who he was I would get rid of him as I did of Contenson. Why cannot I see Asia once more?"

After having signed the paper written by Coquart, the judge put it into an envelope and handed it to the messenger of the Bureau of Assignments.

The Bureau of Assignments is an indispensable aid to justice. This bureau, presided over by a

commissioner of police *ad hoc*, is composed of officers of the peace, who, by the aid of police commissioners, serve warrants for appearance in court and even arrest, upon persons suspected of complicity in crimes or misdemeanors. These delegates of Judicial authority save precious time to magistrates conducting examinations.

Upon a sign from the judge, the prisoner was dressed by M. Lebrun and by his assistant, who withdrew together with the usher. Camusot sat down at his desk and began to toy with his pen.

"You have an aunt," said Camusot suddenly to Jacques Collin.

"An aunt!" replied Don Carlos Herrera in astonishment, "Why, your honor, I have no relations; I am an unrecognized son of the late Duke d'Ossuna," and to himself he added, *"They burn!"* in allusion to the game of hide and seek, infantile image of the terrible struggle between justice and the criminal.

"Bah!" said Camusot, "your aunt is still alive; Mademoiselle Jacqueline Collin, whom you placed in the service of Mademoiselle Esther, beneath the fantastic name of Asia."

Jacques Collin shrugged his shoulders carelessly, a gesture perfectly in harmony with the air of curiosity with which he received the communication of the judge who examined him with cunning scrutiny.

"Take care," continued the judge; "hear me out."

"I am listening, your honor."

"Your aunt is a vender at the Temple; her business is managed by a woman named Paccard, sister of a convict surnamed La Romette, and formerly an honest person. Justice is upon your aunt's traces, and in a few hours we shall have decisive proof. This woman is very devoted to you—"

"Continue, sir," said Jacques Collin quietly, in answer to the pause which Camusot made, "I am listening."

"Your aunt, who is some five years your senior, has been the mistress of Marat, of odious memory. It is from this bloody source that the nucleus of her present fortune has sprung. According to the information I possess she is exceedingly clever at concealing the traces of her crimes, for at present there are no proofs against her. After Marat's death she seems to have belonged, according to statements which I have at hand, to a chemist, condemned to death in the year XII. for the crime of counterfeiting. She appeared as a witness at the trial. It was during her intimacy with this man that she seems to have acquired a knowledge of poisons. From the year XII. to 1806, she dealt in second-hand clothes. She underwent two years imprisonment in 1812 and 1816, for having enticed girls under age into vice. You were already condemned for the crime of forgery; you had left the bank where your aunt had placed you as clerk, thanks to the education which you had received, and to the patronage which your aunt enjoyed from persons for whose pleasures she furnished victims.

All this, prisoner, seems to bear but small resemblance to the greatness of the dukes of Ossuna. Do you persist in your denial?"

Jacques Collin listened to M. Camusot as if he were thinking of his happy childhood at the Collége des Oratoriens, where he had graduated; meditations which lent him an air of realistic astonishment. In spite of his adroit interrogative diction, Camusot did not arouse the slightest movement in this placid countenance.

"If you have written correctly the explanation which I gave you in the first place, you may read it again," replied Jacques Collin, "I cannot alter it —I had never before been to the courtesan's house; how should I know who was her cook? I am an absolute stranger to the person of whom you speak."

"In spite of your denial, we shall proceed to testimony which may diminish your assurance."

"A man who has once been shot under sentence of court martial is accustomed to everything," replied Jacques Collin, gently.

Camusot again glanced over the pile of confiscated papers while he waited for the return of the Chief of the Secret Service. The expedition of the latter was extraordinary, for the examination had begun about half past ten and now, at half past eleven, the usher appeared and announced in a low voice that Bibi Lupin had arrived.

"Show him in!" replied M. Camusot.

*

Bibi Lupin entered the room. Instead of crying out "It is he!" as the judge had expected, he stood still in surprise. He no longer recognized the face of *his customer* in a visage furrowed by the ravages of small-pox.

This hesitation was not without its effect on the judge.

"It is certainly his figure, his proportions," said the agent.—"Ah, it is you, Jacques Collin!" replied he, examining the eyes, the shape of the forehead and the ears. "There are some things which cannot be disguised.—It is he beyond question, Monsieur Camusot—Jacques has the scar left by a knife blade upon his left arm, make him take off his coat; you shall see it."

Once again Jacques Collin was obliged to remove his coat. Bibi Lupin drew back the sleeve of his shirt and pointed to the scar he had named.

"It is a ball," replied Don Carlos Herrera; "here are many other scars."

"Ah, that is his voice!" exclaimed Bibi Lupin.

"Your certainty," said the judge, "is simply an assertion; it is not proof."

"I know it," answered Bibi Lupin humbly; "but I shall find witnesses. Already one of the boarders of the Maison Vauquer is here—" said he, looking at Collin.

Collin's placid countenance was undisturbed.

"Admit the woman," said M. Camusot, with a peremptoriness which showed his discontent in spite of his apparent indifference.

This alteration was marked by Jacques Collin, who, counting but little upon the sympathy of the examining judge, sank into an apparent unconsciousness, produced by the violent meditation through which he sought to discover its cause. The usher introduced Madame Poiret, whose unexpected appearance sent a shudder through the convict's frame, which was not remarked by the judge. Camusot seemed to have decided on his course.

"What is your name?" demanded the judge, proceeding with the formalities which begin all depositions as well as examinations.

Madame Poiret, a little old woman, pale, wrinkled as a sweetbread, and dressed in a gown of coarse blue silk, declared that her name was Christine-Michelle Michonneau, that she was the wife of M. Poiret, that she was fifty-one years old, had been born in Paris, dwelt in the rue des Poules, at the corner of the rue des Postes, and that for a living she let furnished apartments.

"In 1818 and 1819, Madame," said the judge, "you lived in a cheap boarding house kept by a certain Madame Vauquer?"

"Yes, sir; it was there that I made the acquaintance of M. Poiret, a retired clerk who has since become my husband, and at whose bedside I have

been watching for the past year.—Poor man—he is very sick, and so I must not be long away from home."

"At that time there was in this boarding house a certain Vautrin?" inquired the judge.

"Oh! sir, that's a long story! He was a dreadful convict."

"You aided in his arrest."

"It is false, sir."

"You are in the presence of the law, be careful!" said M. Camusot severely.

Madame Poiret was silent.

"Collect your thoughts," continued Camusot. "Do you remember this man distinctly? Would you recognize him?"

"I believe so."

"Is this the man?" said the judge.

Madame Poiret put on her spectacles and looked at the Abbé Carlos Herrera.

"It is his breadth of shoulders, his figure; but—no—if, your honor," continued she, "I might be allowed to see his chest bare, I could identify him at once."—See *Père Goriot.*—

In spite of the gravity of their functions neither the judge nor the clerk could hold back their laughter; Jacques Collin shared their hilarity, but in moderation. The prisoner had not put on his coat which Bibi Lupin had just removed, and at a sign from the judge he opened his shirt complacently.

"That is his hair—but it has grown gray, Monsieur Vautrin!" exclaimed Madame Poiret.

"What have you to say to this?" demanded the judge of the prisoner.

"That she is mad!" replied Jacques Collin.

"Ah! Heaven! If I had a doubt, for he has no longer the same face, that voice would suffice—he is certainly the man who threatened me. Ah! that is his look!"

"The agent of the detective police and this woman cannot have made any preconcerted agreement to say the same thing about you," continued the judge, addressing Jacques Collin, "for neither of them had seen you. How do you explain this?"

"Justice has committed errors still greater than that which might follow from the testimony of a woman who recognizes a man by the hair of his chest, and the suspicions of a detective," replied Jacques Collin. "They find in me resemblances in voice, look and figure, to a great criminal; that is vague enough. As to a reminiscence which seems to prove between this woman and my Sosie relations at which she does not blush—you laughed at it yourself. Will you, sir, in the interests of truth which I desire to establish for my own sake more strongly than you can wish to do in behalf of justice, ask this woman—Foi—"

"Poiret."

—"Poiret—pardon me—I am a Spaniard—whether she recalls the persons who lived in this —what do you call the house?"

"A pension bourgeoise," said Madame Poiret.

"I don't know what that is," replied Jacques Collin.

"It's a house where you can lunch and dine by season tickets."

"Right you are!" exclaimed Camusot, who made a motion of the head favorable to Jacques Collin, so forcibly was he struck by the apparent good faith with which the prisoner furnished him with the means of arriving at a result. "Try," he added, "to recall the persons boarding at this house at the time of Jacques Collin's arrest."

"There was M. de Rastignac, Doctor Bianchon, M. Goriot, Mademoiselle Taillefer—"

"Well," said the judge, who had not ceased to gaze at Jacques Collin, whose face remained impassible, "Well, this M. Goriot?"—

"He is dead," said Madame Poiret.

"Sir," said Jacques Collin, "I have often met at Lucien's rooms a M. de Rastignac, an intimate friend, I believe, of Madame de Nucingen, and if he is the person in question, he has never taken me for the convict with whom they are trying to confound me—"

"M. de Rastignac and Dr. Bianchon," said the judge, "both enjoy social positions such that their testimony, if favorable to you, would suffice to set you at liberty—Coquart, prepare their summons."

In a few minutes the formalities of Madame Poiret's deposition were concluded; Coquart read aloud to her the written report of the scene which had taken place, and she affixed her signature; but

the prisoner refused to sign his name, alleging his ignorance of the forms of French law.

"This is quite enough for to-day," said M. Camusot; "you must have need of food. I will have you escorted to the Conciergerie."

"Alas! I suffer too much to eat," said Jacques Collin.

Camusot intended to make Jacques Collin's return coincide with the hour in which prisoners were allowed to walk in the yard; but he wished to obtain from the director of the Conciergerie an answer to the order which he had given him that morning, and he rang in order to dispatch his usher to the prison. The usher appeared and said that the janitress of the house on the quai Malaquais had given him an important letter relative to M. Lucien de Rubempré. The incident was so importtant that Camusot forgot his design.

"Admit her!" said he.

"Pardon; excuse me, sir," said the janitress, bowing first to the judge and then to the Abbé Carlos. "My husband and I have been so frightened by the two visits which the law has made us that we forgot a letter in our bureau addressed to M. Lucien, for which we paid ten sous, although it comes from Paris, for it is very heavy. Will you make good the postage? Heaven knows when we shall see our lodgers again!"

"This letter was given you by the postman?" demanded Camusot, after having examined the envelope with minute care.

"Yes, sir."

"Coquart, make out the report of this declaration. You, my good woman, give your name and occupation."

After having administered the oath to the janitress, Camusot dictated the report.

During the accomplishment of these formalities, he verified the postmark, which bore the dates of the hours of collection and of delivery as well as of the day of the month. This letter, delivered at Lucien's lodgings on the day following Esther's death, had no doubt been written and posted on the day of the catastrophe.

Now the reader can judge of the stupefaction which came over M. Camusot as he read this letter, written and signed by the very woman whom justice believed to be the victim of a crime:

"ESTHER TO LUCIEN.

"MONDAY, May 13, 1830.

My last day at ten o'clock in the morning.

"MY LUCIEN:—I have not an hour to live. At eleven o'clock I shall be dead, and I shall die without sorrow. I have paid fifty thousand francs for a pretty little black gooseberry, which kills with the swiftness of lightning. Thus, dear heart, you may say, 'My little Esther did not suffer.' Yes, I shall have suffered only in writing you these pages.

"The brute that has bought me so dearly, knowing that the day on which I should belong to him should have no morrow for me, Nucingen, has just gone away drunk as a drunken bear. For the first and last time in my life I have been able to contrast my former trade, as a courtesan, with a life of honest love, to rate the tenderness which expands into the infinite higher than the horror of duty which had rather die than submit to one kiss. I need this disgust in order to find death sweet. I have taken a bath; I wished to summon the confessor from the convent where I was baptized, in order to confess and thus to cleanse my soul. But this would have been to profane a sacrament, and besides I feel that I am washed in the waters of sincere repentance. God will work His will upon me.

"Enough of these complaints; I wish to be yours, your Esther, until the last moment, and not to distress your mind with thoughts of my death, of the future, and of the good God who would not be good were He to torture me in another life when I have tasted such sorrow in this.

"I have before me your lovely miniature painted by Madame de Mirbel. This ivory leaf is my consolation for your absence; I look at it with mad delight as I write you my last thoughts and describe to you the last beats of my heart. I will send you the miniature in this letter, for I do not wish it to be stolen or sold. The mere thought that my sole delight may be placed in some shop-window among ladies and officers of the Empire, or Chinese

oddities, makes me feel death already upon me. Destroy this picture, my darling; do not give it away —unless this present can buy you the heart of that petticoated walking lath, Clotilde de Grandlieu, whose angular bones are enough to give you a nightmare. Yes, I consent to that; I should still be of some use to you as I was while I was alive. Ah! if it were to give you pleasure, or if it were but to make you laugh, I would stand before a brazier with an apple in my mouth to cook it for you! My death will be useful to you; I should have disturbed the peace of your household. Oh! that Clotilde; I do not understand her! To have it in her power to be your wife, to bear your name, to leave you neither night nor day, to be yours, and yet to stand on ceremony; a woman must belong to the Faubourg Saint Germain to do that—and not have ten pounds of flesh upon her bones!—

"Poor Lucien, vainly ambitious boy, I dream of your future! Go your way. You will more than once regret your poor faithful dog, the devoted woman who stole for you, who would gladly have been dragged before a Court of Assizes were it to insure your happiness whose sole occupation was to dream of your present pleasures, and to invent fresh delights, who loved you with her hair, her feet, her ears, in a word your plaything; whose every glance was a benediction on you; who for six years thought only of you, who was so completely your creature that I have never been but an emanation of your soul as light is of the sun. But, without

money and honor, alas! I cannot become your wife —I have always provided for your future by giving you all that I possess. Come the instant you receive this letter and take that which is under my pillow, for I distrust the servants of the house.

"I wish to be beautiful in death. I shall undress, I shall lie down in my bed, I shall *pose*. Then I shall press the gooseberry against my palate and I shall not be disfigured by convulsions nor any ridiculous posture.

"I know that Madame de Sérizy has quarreled with you because of me; but you can plainly see, my darling, that when she learns that I am dead, she will pardon; you must be attentive to her and she will arrange a noble marriage for you, if the Grandlieu persist in their refusal.

"My sweetheart, I do not wish you to lament long over my death. First, I must tell you that the hour of eleven on Monday the thirteenth of May is but the termination of a long illness which began on the day when, upon the terrace of Saint Germain, you cast me back into my old life. The soul has its illness as well as the body, but unlike the body, it cannot endure suffering blindly. The body does not support the soul as the soul supports the body, and the soul has strong medicine in the thought of recourse to the sempstress' bushel of charcoal. You gave me life, the day before yesterday, by saying that if Clotilde were to refuse you, you would marry me. This would have been a great misfortune for both of us, I should have died still

more, so to speak, for some deaths are more bitter than others. The world would never have accepted us.

"For two months I have been meditating upon many things. A poor girl is in the mire as I was before my entry into the convent; men find her fair, they use her for their pleasures, without consideration; they come for her in a carriage and send her away afoot; if they do not spit in her face it is because her beauty protects her from this outrage: morally, they commit a greater sin. Well, if this girl inherits five or six millions, she will be sought by princes, men will bow to her with respect when she passes in her carriage—she can make her choice among the most ancient escutcheons of France and of Navarre. This world, which would have exclaimed "raca," had it seen two beautiful creatures united and happy, has often uncapped itself before Madame de Staël, in spite of the romances of her life, simply because she had an income of two hundred thousand francs. The world, which bows before money or glory, will not bow before happiness or virtue, for I should have done good—Ah! how many tears I should have dried!—as many, I suppose, as I have shed already. Yes, it would have been my wish to live only for you and charity.

"These are the thoughts which make death sweet for me. So do not weep for me, my love! Say often to yourself: 'There have been two loving women, two beautiful creatures, who have both died for me without regret, for they worshipped

me!' Call up within your heart a picture of Coralie, and one of Esther, and go your way. Do you remember the day that you pointed out to me a shriveled, old woman, in a dull green cape that hung down over a gray gown, padded and stained with black grease spots, the mistress of a poet before the Revolution? The sun scarcely warmed her, although she was sitting in the gardens of the Tuileries, anxiously watching a wretched spaniel, the most bedraggled of spaniels. You know she had owned lackeys and carriages and a hotel! I said to you, 'Better die at thirty;' well, that day you found me thoughtful, and caressed me to distract my mind; and between two kisses I spoke to you again, and said, 'Every day pretty women go out from the play before the curtain falls!'—I have not wished to see the last act, that is all.—

"You must find me garrulous, but it is my last chance. I write as I used to talk, and I like to talk gaily to you. Weeping sempstresses have always disgusted me. You know that once already I have known how to die *properly,* upon my return from that fatal ball of the Opera, where they told you what my past had been.

"Oh no, my dearest; never give away this portrait! If you knew the floods of love which I have buried in your eyes as I have been gazing at them during a pause of drunken pleasure, you would think, as you received the love which I have tried to incrust upon this ivory, that the soul of your beloved darling was there.

"Dead and asking alms; there is something comic in the notion! I must learn to lie quietly in my grave.

"You can imagine how heroic my death would seem to simpletons if they knew that last night Nucingen offered me two millions if I would consent to love him as I have loved you. He will be neatly tricked when he finds out that I kept my word and died of him.

"I have tried everything to continue to breathe the air which you breathe. I said to the fat robber: 'Do you wish to be loved as you desire? I will even promise never to see Lucien again.' 'What must I do?' he demanded.—'Give me two millions for him?' No! If you had seen his grimace. I should have laughed if it all had not been so tragic. 'Spare yourself a refusal!' I said. 'I see, you care more for two millions than for me: —A woman is always pleased to know what she is worth,' I added, turning my back upon him.

"In a few hours the old rascal will know that I was not joking.

"Who will be able to part your hair like me? Bah! I do not wish to think of life; I have but five minutes more, I give them to God; do not be jealous, my beloved angel, I wish to speak to Him of you, to ask of Him your happiness as the price of my death, and of my punishment in another world. I hate to go to hell; I should have liked well to see the angels and learn whether they were like you.

"Adieu, my darling, adieu. I bless you for all my sorrow. Even in the grave I shall be,

"YOUR ESTHER.

"Eleven o'clock is striking. I have made my last prayer. I am about to lie down and die. Once more, good-bye! I wish that the warmth of my hand might leave my soul upon your picture as I imprint upon it one last kiss; and I wish once more to call you my sweet darling, although you are the cause of the death of

"YOUR ESTHER."

A touch of jealousy pricked the judge's heart as he finished reading the only letter of a suicide which he had ever seen written in a spirit of gaiety; though it was but a feverish gaiety, the last effort of blind adoration.

"What is it that makes a man loved thus?" thought he, repeating the question of every man who has not the gift of pleasing women.—"If it is possible for you not only to prove that you are not Jacques Collin, the ex-convict, but also that you are actually Don Carlos Herrera, canon of Toledo, and secret envoy of his Majesty, Ferdinand VII.," continued the judge, addressing Jacques Collin, "you shall be set at liberty, for the impartiality which my office demands compels me to tell you that I have this moment received a letter written by Mademoiselle Esther Gobseck, in which she

avows the intention of suicide, and intimates suspicions concerning her servants, which appear to designate them as the authors of the robbery of the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs."

As he spoke M. Camusot compared the handwriting of the letter with that of the will, and it was clear to him that letter and testament had been written by the same hand.

"Your honor was too ready to believe in a murder; do not believe too hastily in a theft."

"Ah!" said Camusot, casting a magisterial look upon the prisoner.

"Do not think that I compromise myself in saying that this sum can be recovered," continued Jacques Collin, showing the judge that he understood his suspicion. "This poor woman was much beloved by her servants; and if I were free I would undertake a search for the money which now belongs to the being I love most in the world, to Lucien. Will you be so kind as to allow me to read this letter? It will not take long. It is the proof of the innocence of my dear child—you cannot fear that I would destroy it, nor speak of it, for I am in solitary confinement."

"In solitary confinement!" cried the magistrate, "you shall be so no longer. It is I who beg you to establish your identity as soon as possible; send word to your ambassador if you wish—"

Camusot handed the letter to Jacques Collin, glad to be rescued from his quandary and to be able to satisfy at once the attorney-general, the Duchess

de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy. None the less coldly and curiously, however, did he examine the face of his prisoner as the latter read the courtesan's letter; and in spite of the sincerity of the emotions painted upon it, he said to himself:

"And yet it is the face of a criminal!"

"See how he is loved," said Jacques Collin, returning the letter, as he turned toward the judge, his face bathed in tears.

"If you knew him!" continued he, "he is so young, so fresh, so gloriously handsome; a child, a poet.—You cannot see him without an irresistible desire of sacrificing yourself to him and of satisfying his least desires. Dear Lucien is so fascinating when he cares to charm!"

"Now," said the magistrate, making one more effort to discover the truth, "you cannot be Jacques Collin."

"No, sir," replied the convict.

Jacques Collin became more than ever Don Carlos Herrera. In his desire to complete his work he advanced toward the judge, led him into the embrasure of the window, and assuming the manners of a prince of the Church, he said in a confidential tone:

"I love this child so well, sir, that if it were necessary for me to become the criminal for whom you take me in order to spare myself a quarrel with this idol of my heart, I would be my own accuser," said he in a low voice. "I would imitate the poor girl who has killed herself for his advantage. Thus,

sir, I beg of you to grant me a favor; it is to set Lucien at liberty at once."

"My duty does not allow it," said Camusot kindly: "but if heaven can be accommodating, justice can also be polite, and if you can give me good reasons—Speak freely, this shall not be written."

"Then, " continued Jacques Collin, deceived by Camusot's kindliness"I know all that this poor child suffers at this moment; he is capable of attempting his life when he finds himself in prison—"

"Oh! as to that—" said Camusot, shrugging his shoulders.

"You do not know whom you oblige in obliging me," added Jacques Collin, who wished to pull other strings. "You are doing a service to an order more powerful than Countess de Sérizy or Duchess de Maufrigneuse, who will scarcely pardon you for having read their letters in your office," said he, pointing toward two perfumed packets. "My order is not forgetful."—

"Sir," said Camusot, "enough! Find other reasons to offer me. I owe my duty more to the prisoner than to the vindictiveness of the public."

"Ah! believe me, I know Lucien; his is a woman's soul, a poet's, a southerner's, without consistency or will," continued Jacques Collin, who thought the day surely gained. "You are certain of the innocence of this young man; do not torture him; do not examine him; give him this letter, tell him that he is Esther's heir, and set him free. If you act otherwise, you will drive him to despair;

while if you release him purely and simply, I will explain to you—keep me in solitary confinement—to-morrow—to-night, everything that may appear to you mysterious about this trial, and the reasons for the malignant pursuit which follows me; but I will stake my life upon it, my head has been in danger for five years past—Lucien free, rich, and married to Clotilde de Grandlieu, my task here on earth is accomplished, I shall no longer defend my life.—My persecutor is a spy of your late king's."

"Ah! Corentin!"

"Ah! His name is Corentin? I thank you. Well, sir, will you promise to grant my request?"

"A judge cannot and ought not to promise anything. Coquart, tell the usher and gendarmes to lead the prisoner back to the Conciergerie. I shall give orders so that you may spend to-night in a pistole," added he kindly, making a slight inclination of his head toward the prisoner.

Struck with the demand that Jacques Collin had just addressed to him, and recalling the prisoner's urgent appeal to be examined first, pleading the critical state of his health, Camusot resumed all his distrust. As he listened to these indeterminate suspicions, he saw the man who had pretended to be at the point of death walking, striding like a Hercules, without a trace of those contortions which he had feigned so admirably on his arrival.

"Sir?—"

Jacques Collin turned.

"My clerk, in spite of your refusal to sign, is

going to read you the report of your examination."

The prisoner was in perfect health; the movement with which he took his seat near the clerk was another gleam of light for the judge.

"You have been promptly cured?" said Camusot.

"I am caught," thought Jacques Collin. Then he answered aloud!

"Joy, sir, is the only panacea that exists—this letter, the proof of innocence which I never doubted, that is the great remedy."

The judge followed his prisoner with a thoughtful look as the usher and gendarmes surrounded him; then he started as though from deep sleep, and tossed Esther's letter upon the clerk's desk.

"Coquart, copy that letter!"

If it is in man's nature to mistrust a request, when the favor demanded of him is against his interests or his duty, or often, even, when it is a matter of indifference, this feeling is the law of an examining judge. The more plainly the prisoner, whose fate still hung in the balance, could discern the clouds that would rise over the horizon in case Lucien were examined, the more necessary this examination appeared to Camusot.

This formality was demanded by neither Code nor precedent, unless it were required by the question of Don Carlos' identity. Every career has its own peculiar conscience. Had he lacked curiosity Camusot would have questioned Lucien as he had questioned Jacques Collin, from his sense of

magisterial honor, making use of the artifices which the most upright magistrates employ. The favor, which it lay in his power to confer, his own advancement, everything in Camusot's mind was subordinate to the overpowering desire of learning the truth and of unearthing it himself, even though he were never to divulge the secret. He drummed upon the window-panes and gave himself up to the flood tide of his conjectures, for at times such as this, thought is like a river flowing through a thousand different regions. Lovers of the truth, magistrates are like jealous women: they give way to a thousand suppositions and, armed with the dagger of suspicion, they search their victims' hearts like the sacrificial priest of ancient times; then they halt not at the true, but at the probable, and at last they obtain a distant vision of the truth. A woman questions the man she loves as a judge interrogates a criminal. When their minds are in this state a flash of light, a word, an inflection of the voice, the hesitation of an instant suffice to discover buried truth, treason and crime.

"The manner in which he has painted his devotion to his son—if he be his son—inclines me to believe that he was in Esther's house to watch over the harvest; and not suspecting that the dead woman's pillow hid a will, he has taken for his son's sake the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs, *provisionally!* This is the reason of his promise to recover the money. M. de Rubempré owes it to himself and to justice that he should

throw light upon the civil status of his father. And to think of his promising me the protection of his order—his order!—if I do not examine Lucien—"

His meditation broke off at this point.

As we have seen, an examining magistrate directs an examination according to his pleasure. He is free to use craft or to lack it. An examination is nothing, or it is everything. There lies the importance of influence. Camusot rang; the usher returned. The judge ordered him to bring M. Lucien de Rubempré, and bade him see to it that the prisoner communicated with nobody on the way. It was then two o'clock in the afternoon.

"There is a secret," said the judge to himself, "and this secret must be of the last importance. The reasoning of my amphibian, who is neither priest nor layman, convict nor Spaniard, but who fears lest some terrible word escape his pupil's lips is this: 'The poet is weak, he is womanish, he is not like me, who am a Hercules of diplomacy, and you can easily tear our secret from him.' So our young innocent shall tell us all."

He began to rap the table with his ivory-handled knife while his clerk was busy copying Esther's letter. How many idiosyncrasies there are in the use of our faculties! Camusot, thinking every crime possible, passed over the only one which the prisoner had committed—the forged will in Lucien's favor. Let those who envy the position of a magistrate ponder well over his life passed in perpetual

suspicions, the tortures which weigh upon his mind, for civil suits are not less tortuous than criminal trials, and perhaps they will think that the magistrate's harness is heavy as the priest's and as thickly studded with inward-pointing nails. Every profession has its hair-shirt and its tomahawk.

*

It was almost two o'clock when Lucien entered M. Camusot's office. The prisoner was pale and wasted, his eyes red and swollen, and his whole frame so nerveless that the judge was enabled to compare nature with art, and contrast the dying man in real life with the dying actor upon the stage. The passage from the Conciergerie to the judge's office, made between two gendarmes, with an usher going before, had brought Lucien to the pinnacle of despair. It is in a poet's soul to prefer punishment to judgment. When the examiner saw this nature so entirely bereft of the moral courage essential to decision, the quality which had been displayed by the other prisoner in such an extraordinary degree, M. Camusot's compassion was aroused at the prospect of this easy victory, yet rising scorn allowed him to strike home and gave him in this encounter that awful freedom of the will which characterizes the marksman as he decides which puppet to strike down.

"Compose your thoughts, Monsieur de Rubempré, you are in the presence of a magistrate most eager to repair the wrong which justice does involuntarily in making an arrest, for the sake of prevention, when the charge proves to be unfounded. I believe that you are innocent; you shall be set at liberty immediately. Here is the proof of your innocence;

it is a letter kept by your janitress in your absence, which she brought to me a minute ago. In the disturbance caused by the descent of the police and by the news of your arrest at Fontainebleau, the woman had forgotten this letter, which comes from Mademoiselle Esther Gobseck—read it!"

Lucien took the letter, read it, and burst into tears. He sobbed so violently that he could not utter a syllable. After a quarter of an hour, an interval which scarcely allowed Lucien time to recover, the clerk handed him a copy of the letter and asked him to sign a *certificate that this copy conforms to the original, so that it may be produced when necessary at any time during this trial*, and at the same time offered to compare the two documents word for word; Lucien, however, naturally relied upon Coquart's word as to the accuracy of the copy.

"Sir," said the judge, in a most friendly tone, "it is nevertheless, difficult to give you your liberty until we fulfil our formalities and ask you a few questions. It is almost as a witness that I require of you to answer. I deem it well nigh useless to remind a man like you that the oath to tell the whole truth is not only an appeal to your conscience, but also a necessity of your position, which for a few hours is placed in a doubtful light. Whatever it may be the truth cannot alter your position, but a lie would send you to the Court of Assizes, and oblige me to have you led back to the Conciergerie; while by answering my questions frankly, you will sleep to-night in your own bed and your

reputation will be restored by this statement which the newspapers will publish: 'M. de Rubempré arrested yesterday at Fontainebleau, was released immediately after a very brief examination.'"

This speech produced a lively impression upon Lucien's mind, and, noticing the disposition of his prisoner, the judge added:

"I repeat to you, you were suspected of complicity in a murder by means of poison committed upon the person of Mademoiselle Esther: there is proof of her suicide, so much is satisfactorily answered; but a sum of seven hundred and fifty thousand francs, which depends upon the will, has been abstracted, and you are the heir. In this, unhappily, there is a crime. This crime has preceded the discovery of the will. Justice, however, has reasons for believing that a person who loves you as well as this Mademoiselle Esther loved you, has suffered this crime to be committed for the sake of your interests—Do not interrupt me," said Camusot, with a gesture imposing silence, as Lucien attempted to speak; "I am not examining you yet. I wish to make you understand how deeply your honor is concerned in this question. Cast aside the false, the wretched ideas of honor which bind accomplices together, and tell the whole truth."

The reader must have already noticed the excessive disproportion of weapons in this struggle between prisoner and examining judge. A denial cleverly managed, it is true, is sufficient in itself, and completes the criminal's defense; but it is, as

it were, a panoply which crushes its wearer when once the searching knife of examination discovers an unprotected joint, since denial is powerless in the face of certain evident facts, and the prisoner is placed absolutely at the discretion of the judge. Take, for example, the case of a partial criminal like Lucien, saved from his first fall from virtue, he might yet become a useful servant to his country; but yet he will perish in the toils of the examination. The judge writes out a very concise report, a faithful analysis of questions and answers; but of his insidiously paternal speeches, and of his captious remonstrances, such as Camusot employed in this scene, there remains no trace. The judges of the Superior Court and the juries see the results, but do not know the means. Thus, according to the judgments of several excellent minds, the trial by jury, as it is in England, might with advantage supersede the present method of examination.

France enjoyed this system for a brief time. Under the Code of Brumaire, in the year IV., this institution was known as the jury of accusation, to distinguish it from the jury of judgment. If juries of accusation should again be instituted, the final decision would, of necessity, be referred to the royal courts unassisted by juries of any kind.

"Now," said Camusot, after a pause "what is your name?—Monsieur Coquart, attention!" added he to the clerk.

"Lucien Chardon de Rubempré."

"You were born—?"

"In Augoulême—"

Lucien gave the day, the month and the year.

"You have never had any patrimony?"

"None."

"Nevertheless, during your first sojourn in Paris you have made expenditures that were very large in proportion to your small fortune?"

"Yes, sir; but at that time I had in Mademoiselle Coralie a friend absolutely devoted to my welfare. It has since been my misfortune to lose her. It was the sorrow which her death caused me that brought me back to my native place."

"Sir," said Camusot, "I commend your frankness; it shall not pass unnoticed."

As the reader perceives, Lucien was on the high road to a general confession.

"You spent sums far larger still upon your return from Augoulême to Paris," continued Camusot; "you lived as if you enjoyed an income of some sixty thousand francs."

"Yes, sir."

"Who furnished you with this money?"

"My protector, the Abbé Carlos Herrera."

"Where did you meet him?"

"I met him upon the highway, just as I was about to rid myself of life by suicide—"

"You have never heard him spoken of in your family—by your mother?"

"Never."

"Your mother never told you that she had met the Spaniard?"

"Never."

"Can you recall the month and the year when you met Mademoiselle Esther?"

"Toward the end of the year 1823, at a small theatre on the boulevard."

"Did she, at first, cost you money?"

"Yes, sir."

"Lately, with the intention of marrying Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, you purchased what is left of the Château de Rubempré, and you have annexed to its estate lands to the amount of a million francs; you told the Grandlieu family that your sister and brother-in-law had recently come into possession of a large inheritance, and that you owed these sums to their liberality? You did say this, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are ignorant of the reasons which led to the rupture of your marriage?"

"Entirely, sir."

"They are these: the Duke de Grandlieu sent one of the most reliable attorneys in Paris to your brother-in-law in order to obtain authentic information. In Angoulême, the lawyer learned from the personal avowals of your sister and brother-in-law not only that they had lent you little, yet furthermore that their inheritance was composed of real estate, valuable, it is true, but that their capital scarcely amounted to two hundred thousand francs. —You must not think it strange that a family like the Grandlieu recoils before a fortune of dishonest

origin. This, sir—is the pass to which a lie has brought you."

Lucien was horror-stricken at this revelation, and the little strength of mind which he had preserved now deserted him.

"The police and justice know everything they care to know," said Camusot; "remember that. Now," continued he, thinking of the declaration of fatherhood which Jacques Collin had made, "do you know who this so-called Carlos Herrera is?"

"Yes, sir; but I learned the secret too late."

"What do you mean? too late? explain yourself."

"He is not a priest, he is not a Spaniard, he is—"

"An escaped convict?" said the judge quickly.

"Yes," replied Lucien. "When the fatal secret was revealed to me I was his debtor; I had supposed myself bound to a respectable priest—"

"Jacques Collin—" said the judge, beginning a sentence.

"Yes, Jacques Collin," repeated Lucien; "that is his name."

"So far so good. Jacques Collin," continued Camusot, "has just been recognized by a woman, and if he still denies his identity it is, I believe, for your interests. But I asked you whether you knew who this man is in order to bring to light another imposture of Jacques Collin."

Lucien felt a red-hot iron sear his very entrails as he heard this ominous speech.

"Do you not know," continued the judge, "that

he pretends to be your father in order to justify the extraordinary affection which he feels for you?"

"He, my father! Oh! sir!—He said that!"

"Can you suspect from what source the sums came which he gave to you; for if I must believe the letter which you hold in your hand, this poor unfortunate Mademoiselle Esther would later have done you the same service which Mademoiselle Coralie has rendered you already; but you have contrived, as you have just said, to live for several years, and in luxury too, without receiving a penny from her."

"It is of you I ask, sir" cried Lucien, "the sources of a convict's money!—A Jacques Collin, my father! O! my poor mother!"

The young man burst into tears.

"Clerk, read aloud to the prisoner that portion of the examination of the pretended Carlos Herrera in which he states that he is the father of Lucien de Rubempré."

The poet listened to this reading in silence, with an expression painful to see.

"I am lost!" he cried.

"No man is lost upon the path of honor and of truth," replied the judge.

"But you will send Jacques Collin before the Court of Assizes?" asked Lucien.

"Certainly," replied Camusot, who wished to make Lucien continue his confession. "Finish what you were about to say."

But in spite of the efforts and the remonstrances

of the judge, Lucien returned no answer. Reflection had come too late, as it ever must to men who are the slaves of sensation. There lies the difference between the poet and the man of action: one surrenders himself to the sentiment he wishes reproduced in lifelike images, he never judges until afterward; while the other feels and judges simultaneously. Lucien stood there, sad and pale; he felt himself at the foot of a precipice, down which the judge had hurled him. His poet's nature had been deceived by the kindliness of his examiner. He had betrayed not his benefactor, but the accomplice who had defended their position with all the courage of a lion, and with craft that left no spot unprotected. At the moment when Jacques Collin had saved all by his audacity, Lucien, the clever Lucien, had lost all by his stupidity and by his want of reflection. This infamous lie which had aroused his indignation served as a screen for a yet more infamous truth. Confounded by the subtlety, and unnerved by the cruel ingenuity of the judge who had struck his blows in quick succession, making use of all the naked sins of Lucien's life, like drag-hooks to rake his conscience, the poet stood motionless as an animal whom the axe of the slaughter-house has missed. He had entered the office free and innocent; in an instant he had proved himself guilty by his own avowals. Then, last and most solemn mockery of all, the cold, calm judge told Lucien that his revelations were the fruit of a mistake. Camusot was intent upon the

character of father which Jacques Collin had assumed, while Lucien, simply fearing lest his alliance with an escaped convict become public, had imitated the famous error of the murderers of Ibycus.

It is one of the glories of Royer-Collard that he proclaimed the perpetual triumph of natural obligations over the obligations enforced by social decrees, and that he upheld the cause of the priority of oaths by declaring, for example, that the law of hospitality must bind, even though it annulled, the virtue of the judicial oath. He confessed this theory before the world at the bar of a French court; he boldly lauded the conspirators, and showed that it was human to obey the dictates of friendship rather than tyrannical laws discharged from the social arsenal and directed against such and such a circumstance. Natural justice is governed by laws which, though they have never been promulgated, are yet more efficacious and better known than the bolts forged by society. To his own hindrance Lucien had disregarded the law of joint and separate liability, which commanded him to be silent and to allow Jacques Collin to defend himself; for, more than this, he had been the accuser of his accomplice; for his own interest this man should always have been to him Don Carlos Herrera.

M. Camusot enjoyed his triumph, he held two culprits within his grasp; with the right hand of justice he had struck down one of fashion's favorites and he had discovered the undiscoverable

Jacques Collin. He was destined to be proclaimed one of the cleverest of examining judges. He did not question his victim, but he studied this silence born of consternation, he watched the drops of sweat gather upon the poet's disturbed countenance, grow big, and fall at length mingled with two streams of tears.

"Why do you weep, Monsieur de Rubempré?" You are, as I have told you, the heir of Mademoiselle Esther, who has no other heirs either collateral or direct. This property amounts to well-nigh eight millions if the seven hundred and fifty thousand stolen francs are recovered."

This was the last stroke for the culprit. Courage but for ten minutes, as Jacques Collin had written him in his note and Lucien would have attained the goal of his desires! He might have settled accounts with Jacques Collin, parted from him, become rich, married Mademoiselle de Grandlieu. Nothing can show more eloquently than this scene, the power which the isolation and separation of prisoners bestow upon the judge, or the priceless value of a communication like that which Asia had made to Jacques Collin.

"Ah! sir," answered Lucien, with all the bitterness and irony of a man who stands upon the pedestal of misfortune which his own hands have built, "how right men are to talk in your language about *suffering an examination.* Between the physical torture of the past and the moral torture of to-day I should not hesitate to make my choice, I should

choose the sufferings which the executioner, in times of old, used to inflict.—What more do you wish of me?" he added proudly.

"In this place, sir," said the magistrate, answering the poet's pride with mingled scorn and haughtiness, "I alone have the right to question."

"I had the right to give no reply," murmured poor Lucien, whose intelligence had returned in all its clearness.

"Clerk, read the prisoner his examination."

"I have become a prisoner once more!" said Lucien to himself.

While the secretary was reading this report Lucien took a resolution which determined him to use all courtesy toward the magistrate. When the murmur of Coquart's voice ceased, the poet shook like a man who has slept among sounds to which his organs have grown accustomed, and who at length is startled from his slumber by silence.

"You must sign the report of your examination," said the judge.

"And you set me at liberty?" inquired Lucien, ironical in his turn.

"Not yet," replied Camusot, "but to-morrow, after you are brought face to face with Jacques Collin, you will doubtless be given your liberty. Now, justice must learn whether you are or are not an accomplice of crimes which may have been committed by that person since his escape, which dates from 1820. Nevertheless, your confinement is no

longer solitary. I shall write to the warden to place you in the best chamber of the pistole."

"Shall I find writing materials there?"

"You will be provided with everything you require. I shall send orders to that effect by the usher who is to conduct you thither."

Lucien signed the report mechanically, and wrote his initials on several papers as Coquart directed him, with the docility of a victim reconciled to his fate. A single detail will tell more about his condition than the most minute description. At the announcement of his confrontation with Jacques Collin, the beads of sweat had dried upon his face and his dry eyes glittered with marvelous brightness. In a moment, swift as lightning, he had become like Jacques Collin, a man of bronze.

In persons whose character is like Lucien's, which Jacques Collin had analyzed so accurately, these sudden transitions from a condition of absolute demoralization to a condition as metallic as human power can attain, are the most striking phenomena in the life of ideas. The will returns like water in a dry spring; it permeates the machine set in motion by the unknown essence of which it is made, and then the lifeless body is made man and the man, filled with strength, springs forward to the supreme struggle of existence.

Lucien placed Esther's letter and the portrait which she had sent him, next to his heart. Then bowing disdainfully to M. Camusot, he walked

down the corridor, between two gendarmes, with a firm step.

"There goes an arrant scoundrel!" said the judge to his clerk out of revenge for the crushing scorn which the poet had displayed toward him. "He thought to save himself at the expense of his accomplice."

"Of the two," said Coquart timidly, "the convict is the stronger—"

"You are excused for the day, Coquart," said the judge; "we have done quite enough. Send away the persons who are waiting, and warn them that they must appear to-morrow. Ah! You will go at once to the attorney-general and find out whether he is still in his office; if he is, ask for a moment's audience for me. Oh!—he'll be there," continued the judge, as he glanced toward a wretched wooden clock painted green and decorated with gilded fillets, "it's a quarter after three."

These examinations, which can be read so rapidly, are written out in full, questions as well as answers, and thus consume a great deal of time. This is one of the causes of the delays of criminal processes and the duration of preventive arrests. For the poor, it means ruin; for the rich, it is disgrace; since for them an immediate discharge repairs, so far as anything can repair, the misfortune of an arrest. This is why the two scenes we have so faithfully reproduced filled all the time consumed by Asia in deciphering her master's commands, in carrying away a duchess from her boudoir,

and in inspiring Madame de Sérizy with the energy she lacked.

At this moment Camusot, who was deliberating how he could best reap the rewards of his cleverness, took the two reports and read them again, and decided to show them to the attorney-general and ask his advice. While he was still lost in meditation, his usher appeared to announce that the valet of Madame la Countess de Sérizy insisted upon speaking with his worship. Upon a sign from Camusot an elaborately dressed valet entered, gazed alternately at the usher and the magistrate, and said:

"It is certainly M. Camusot whom I have the honor—?"

"Yes," replied judge and usher.

Camusot took a letter offered him by the servant and read as follows:

"As you know already, my dear Camusot, the interests of many persons demand that you do not examine M. Lucien de Rubempré; we bring you the proofs of his innocence in order that he may be given his liberty immediately.

"L. DE SÉRIZY. D. DE MAUFRIGNEUSE.

"P. S.—Burn this letter."

Camusot felt the magnitude of the error he had committed in spreading nets for Lucien, and his first act was in obedience to the commands of the two noble ladies: he lighted a candle and destroyed

the letter written by the duchess. The valet bowed respectfully.

"Madame de Sérizy is on her way hither then?" inquired Camusot.

"Her horses were being harnessed," replied the valet.

At this juncture Coquart arrived to tell M. Camusot that the attorney-general was awaiting him.

Weighed down beneath the weight of the error which he had made to the detriment of his ambition and the advancement of justice, the judge, who in seven years of practice had developed that finished art which belongs to every man that for duty's sake has crossed swords with grisettes, sought for weapons to defend himself against the revenge of two powerful women. The candle in whose flame he had burned the letter was still lighted, he made use of it to seal the thirty notes written by the Duchess de Maufrigneuse to Lucien and the voluminous correspondence of Madame de Sérizy. Then he made his way to the office of the attorney-general.

*

The Palais de Justice is a confused mass of buildings piled one upon another; some full of grandeur, and others so mean that the effect is injured by lack of harmony. The Salle de pas Perdus is the most imposing of halls, but its bareness is most unsightly. This vast cathedral of chicane chokes the royal court. The Galerie Marchande leads to two great sewers. In this gallery there is a staircase flanked by balusters, and beneath it there is a large doorway with two swinging doors. The staircase leads to the Court of Assizes, and the lower door to a second Court of Assizes. In certain years the crimes committed in the Department of the Seine required two sessions. Beyond this door are situated the office of the attorney-general, the chamber of barristers and their library, the cabinets of the leading lawyers, and those of the substitutes of the attorney-general. These places, for we must use the generic term, are united by small circular stairways, and by those dark corridors, the shame of architecture, the corridor of la Ville de Paris and that of la France. In its interior the first of our sovereign courts of justice surpasses the prisons in everything most hideous that they possess. The painter of manners would recoil before the necessity of describing the mean lobby of a metre's breadth used as an ante-room for the witnesses of the Superior

Court of Assizes. As for the stove which serves to warm the hall when the sittings are held, it would disgrace a café of the boulevard Montparnasse.

The attorney-general's office is situated in an octagonal pavilion, flanking the main body of the Galerie Marchande, which at a date very recent in comparison with the age of the palace, has encroached upon the prison yard annexed to the women's quarters.

All this portion of the Palais de Justice is overshadowed by the high and splendid walls of the Sainte Chapelle. Thus it is sombre and silent.

M. de Granville, worthy successor of the great magistrates of the old parliament, did not wish to leave the palace until Lucien's fate had been decided. He was awaiting news from Camusot, and the judge's message plunged him into the involuntary revery which suspense brings upon the strongest minds. He was seated in the embrasure of his office window; he rose and began to pace up and down the room, for that morning he had found Camusot, in whose path he had stationed himself, but little comprehensible; he felt a vague anxiety and was ill at ease. This is the explanation: the dignity of his functions forbade the attorney-general to tamper with the absolute independence of an inferior magistrate; and in this trial was at stake the honor and reputation of his best friend and warmest protector, the Comte de Sérizy, Minister of State, member of the Privy Council, vice-president of the Council of State, the future

chancellor of France, in case that the noble old man who was holding this august office should chance to die. It was M. de Sérizy's misfortune to adore his wife, in spite of her failings; he was always ready to shelter her beneath his protection. Yet the attorney-general could well foresee the wild excitement both in society and at court, which would follow the conviction of a man whose name had been linked so frequently and so disgracefully with that of the countess.

"Ah!" he said to himself, as he crossed his arms, "authority used to have the resource of transferring cases to other courts.—Our mania for equality—he dared not say *legality,* the word which latterly has been so boldly pronounced by a poet in the presence of the Chamber—will be the destruction of this era.—"

This worthy magistrate knew the allurements and the misfortunes of unlawful love. As we have seen, Esther and Lucien had succeeded to the apartment which the Count de Granville had shared in secret with Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille and whence a scoundrel had one day succeeded in enticing her.—See *A Double Family* in the Scenes of Private Life.—

Just as the attorney-general was saying to himself: "Camusot will be sure to entangle us in some foolish scrape!" the examining judge rapped twice upon the office door.

"Well, my dear sir, how goes the case about which I was talking to you this morning?"

"Badly, Monsieur le Count; read it and judge for yourself."

He handed the two reports of the examinations to M. de Granville, who placed his eye-glasses upon his nose and walked into the embrasure of the window to read the papers. His perusal was very rapid.

"You have done your duty," said the attorney-general, with a voice which betrayed emotion. "The case is closed; justice will take its course. You have displayed too great ability to allow the government ever to deprive itself of such an examining judge."

Had M. Granville said to Camusot, "You will remain an examining judge all the days of your life," he would not have spoken more explicitly than in this complimentary sentence. Camusot felt a shiver course down his backbone.

"Madame la Duchess de Maufrigneuse, to whom I owe much, has asked me—"

"Ah! the Duchess de Maufrigneuse,—she is the friend of Madame de Sérizy," said Granville, interrupting the judge. "It is true—you have bent before no influence, I see; you have done your duty, sir, you will become a great magistrate."

At this moment Count Octave de Bauvan opened the door without knocking, and said to the Count de Granville:

"I am bringing you a charming woman who scarcely knew which way to turn. She was losing herself in our labyrinth."

The Count Octave led by the hand the Countess de Sérizy, who for a quarter of an hour had been wandering blindly through the palace.

"What! you here, madame!" exclaimed the attorney-general, pushing forward his own arm-chair, "at such a time as this, too!—This is M. Camusot, madame," he added, pointing toward the judge;—"Bauvan," continued he, addressing that illustrious ministerial orator of the Restoration, "wait for me in the office of the first president, he is still there, I will rejoin you in an instant."

Count Octave de Bauvan understood not only that his presence was superfluous, but likewise that the attorney-general sought an excuse to leave his office.

Madame de Sérizy had not been so foolish as to drive to the palace in her magnificent coupé, with its blue draperies and armorial bearings, its lace-trimmed coachman and its two footmen in knee breeches and white silk stockings. As the countess was about to start, Asia had explained to the two ladies the necessity of taking the cab in which she and the duchess had arrived; lastly she had assigned to Lucien's mistress an attire such as among women corresponds to the dun-colored cloak once in vogue among men. The countess wore a brown coat, an old black shawl, and a velvet hat, from which the flowers had been torn to make room for a veil of very thick black lace.

"You have received our letter?" she inquired of Camusot, whose stupefaction appeared to her a proof of respectful admiration.

"Too late, alas! Countess," replied the judge, whose tact and ready wit deserted him when he was not seated in his office cross-questioning a prisoner.

"What do you mean by 'Too late?'"

She glanced at M. de Granville and saw consternation painted upon his face.

"It cannot, it must not be too late yet," she added with the intonation of a despot.

Women, pretty women, in Madame de Sérizy's situation are the spoiled children of French civilization. If the women of other countries knew everything that a rich and titled woman of fashion is at Paris, they would all dream of attaining this splendid royalty. Women governed solely by their own ideas of propriety and by that collection of petty laws, already called so often in THE HUMAN COMEDY, the Female Code, scoff at the laws which men have made. They say everything; they recoil before no fault, before no folly; for they have all learned by heart the fact that they are responsible for nothing in life, except for their own and their children's honor. They give utterance to the greatest enormities and laugh. Be the event what it will, they repeat the words spoken by the pretty Madame de Bauvan in the early days of her married life, to her husband, whom she had come to carry away from the palace; "Have done with your judging and come with me!"

"Madame," said the attorney-general, "M. Lucien de Rubempré is guilty neither of robbery nor

assassination; but M. Camusot has made him confess a crime greater than these."

"What?" she demanded.

"He has acknowledged himself," whispered M. de Granville in her ear, "to be the friend and pupil of an escaped convict, the Abbé Carlos Herrera; this Spaniard, who has lived with him for nearly seven years seems to be none other than our famous Jacques Collin.—"

Every word fell upon Madame de Sérizy's ear with all the weight of an iron club, and this notorious name was the finishing blow.

"The meaning of this?" she asked in a voice which was but a breath.

"Is," interrupted M. de Granville, continuing the countess' phrase in a low tone, "that the convict will come before the Court of Assizes, and that if Lucien does not appear at his side for having wilfully profited by his crimes, he will be brought into court as a witness and his reputation will be seriously compromised."

"Ah! never!"—cried she aloud, with extraordinary firmness. "Were I to choose, I should not hesitate between death and the prospect of seeing a man, whom the world looks upon as my dearest friend, declared legally the comrade of a convict. The king likes my husband well—"

"Madame," said the attorney-general aloud, as a smile passed over his lips, "the king has not the slightest control over the pettiest judge within his realm, nor of the pleading in the Court of Assizes.

There lies the grandeur of our new institutions. I, myself, have just been congratulating M. Camusot upon his adroitness—"

"Upon his stupidity," retorted the countess quickly, who felt far less concern at Lucien's relations with an outlaw than at his love for Esther.

"If you will read the examinations of the two prisoners, conducted by M. Camusot, you will see that everything depends upon him—"

After this remark, the only one that the attorney-general allowed himself to hazard, and after a look of feminine, or rather, perhaps, of judicial subtlety, he turned toward the door. As he stood on the sill he turned and added:

"Pardon me, madame, I have a word or two to say to Bauvan."

This, in the language of society, signified to the countess, "I cannot be a witness of what is about to pass between you and Camusot."

"What are these examinations?" asked Léontine gently of Camusot, who stood abashed in the presence of the wife of one of the great officers of state.

"Madame," replied Camusot, "a clerk takes down in writing the questions of the judge and the answers of the prisoners; the report is signed by the clerk, by the judge, and by the prisoner. Subsequent proceedings are built upon the foundation of these reports, which determine the indictment and the committal of prisoners to the Court of Assizes."

"Well," answered she, "suppose that these reports be suppressed?"

"Ah! madame, that would be a crime such as no magistrate could commit, a crime against society!"

"To write them was a far greater crime against me; but at present there is no other proof against Lucien. Read me his examination so that we may know whether there is any expedient left which can save us all, sir. My own peace is not alone at stake, for I would go to my grave cheerfully; the happiness of M. de Sérizy depends upon the result."

"Madame," said Camusot, "do not imagine that I have forgotten the gratitude which I owe you. Had M. Popinot, for instance, been intrusted with this examination, you would have been still more unfortunate than you are with me; for he would never have come to consult the attorney-general, and all that has passed would be a mystery. Why, madame, all M. Lucien's effects were seized, even your letters—"

"Oh! my letters!"

"Here they are, sealed," said the magistrate.

In her perturbation, the countess rang the bell as though she had been at home, and the attorney-general's office boy appeared.

"A light," said she.

The boy lighted a candle and placed it upon the mantel-piece, while the countess collected her letters, counted them, crumpled them in her hand and threw them into the fireplace. Then twisting the last letter with her fingers she used it as a torch to

light the mass of papers. Camusot stood stupidly watching the blaze, with the two reports in his hand. The countess, who appeared solely occupied with the annihilation of every proof of her tenderness, observed the judge from the corners of her eyes. She chose her time, she calculated her movements, and suddenly, with the agility of a cat, she seized the two examinations and flung them into the fire. Camusot snatched them from the blaze; the countess, springing at the judge, seized the burning papers.

A struggle followed, while Camusot was crying out, "Madame! madame! you are attempting—madame—" a man dashed into the office, and the countess could not restrain a cry as she recognized the Count de Sérizy, followed by M. de Bauvan and the attorney-general. Even then, Léontine, determined to save Lucien at any cost, did not relax her grasp from the fatal stamped papers, which her fingers clasped with the strength of pincers, although the flame made her delicate skin look as though it had been cauterized. Camusot, whose fingers were also singed, appeared ashamed of his position and loosened his hold. Of the papers nothing remained except the portion that had been clinched by the struggling hands, so tightly that the fire could not reach it. This entire scene passed more quickly than the moment required to read its recital.

"What can there be between you and Madame de Sérizy which admits of dispute?" demanded the Minister of State of Camusot.

Before the judge could answer, the countess held the papers in the flame of the candle and tossed them upon the fragments of her letters which the fire had not entirely consumed.

"It will be my duty," said Camusot, "to enter a complaint against Madame la Countess."

"Eh! What has she done?" inquired the attorney-general, looking alternately at the countess and the judge.

"I have burned the examinations," answered the woman of fashion with a laugh; for Léontine was so happy at the success of her desperate venture that she was still unconscious of her burns. "If it's a crime, why in that case this gentleman can write his horrible scrawls over again."

"It is true," replied Camusot, endeavoring to recover his dignity.

"After all, everything is for the best," said the attorney-general. "But, my dear countess, it would be unsafe to take such liberties with the magistracy often, for it might fail to recognize you."

"M. Camusot has courageously resisted a woman whom nothing can resist: the honor of the gown is saved!" said the Count de Bauvan, laughing.

"Ah! M. Camusot resisted?" said the attorney-general laughing in his turn; "he is audacity itself, I should never have dared to lift a finger against the countess."

Thus, in a moment, this gravely criminal offence became the joke of a pretty woman, and Camusot laughed over it himself.

The attorney-general noticed one man who did not laugh. Justly alarmed by the attitude and the expression of the Count de Sérizy, M. de Granville took him aside.

"My friend," whispered he, "your sorrow has determined me to compound with my conscience for the first and only time in my life."

The magistrate rang; the office boy appeared.

"Tell M. de Chargebœuf to come and speak with me."

M. de Chargeboeuf, a young man recently admitted to the bar, was the attorney-general's secretary.

"My dear sir," replied the attorney-general, drawing Camusot toward the embrasure of the window, "go to your office; make out anew, with your clerk's help, the examination of the Abbé Carlos Herrera, which, as it was without a signature, can be begun again without difficulty." To-morrow you will confront this *Spanish diplomat* with De Rastignac and Bianchon, who will not recognize him as our Jacques Collin. Upon his release he will sign his examination. As for Lucien de Rubempré, set him at liberty to-night, for he will not be the man to disclose the examination when the report has been suppressed, especially after the warning which I shall give him. The *Gazette des Tribunaux* will announce in to-morrow's issue the young man's immediate release. Now let us see whether justice suffers by these measures. If the Spaniard is the convict we have a thousand and one means of rearresting him, and

of examining him a second time, for we shall receive diplomatic intelligence concerning his conduct in Spain; Corentin, the chief of the counter-police, will shadow him, and thus he will never be beyond our reach; thus it is better to treat him well rather than to incarcerate him longer in solitary confinement. Have we a right to kill the count, the Countess de Sérizy, and Lucien to boot, for a robbery of seven hundred and fifty thousand francs, still unproved, and committed to Lucien's detriment? Would it not be better to let him lose this amount, than to let him lose his reputation? Above all, when he drags downward in his fall a minister of state, his wife, and the Duchess de Maufrigneuse? This young man is a tainted orange, don't let it rot. The whole thing won't take half an hour. Go, we wait for you. It is half after three, the judges have not all gone; find out for me whether you can obtain a verdict of insufficient evidence—or perhaps Lucien can wait until to-morrow morning."

Camusot left the room with a low bow, which Madame de Sérizy, stung with the pain of her scorched hand, did not return. M. de Sérizy who had hastened from the office while the attorney-general was talking with the judge, now returned with a small pot of pure wax, with which he dressed his wife's hands as he whispered:

"Léontine, why did you come without telling me?"

"Dearest," she answered in his ear, "pardon

me; you think me mad; but it was for your sake as well as mine."

"Love this young man, if fate will have it so; but don't flaunt your passion in the eyes of the world," replied her poor husband.

"My dear countess," said M. de Granville, after some conversation with the Count Octave, "I trust that you will take M. de Rubempré home to dine with you to-night."

This half promise aroused so strong a reaction in Madame de Sérizy that she burst into tears.

"I thought that I had done with weeping," said she, with a smile; "could you not summon M. de Rubempré hither?"

"I'll try to find ushers to spare him the company of gendarmes," replied M. de Granville.

"You are kind as an angel!" said Léontine to the attorney-general, with an effusion of tenderness which transformed her voice into divine music.

"Such women as she are always fascinating, irresistible!—" said the Count de Bauvan to himself, as a melancholy picture of his own wife crossed his mind.—See *Honorine*, in the Scenes of Private Life.—

On his way out, M. de Granville was stopped by the young de Chargebœuf, to whom he gave instructions concerning the account which should be given to Massol, one of the editors of the *Gazette des Tribunaux*.

*

While pretty women, ministers and magistrates alike, were conspiring to save Lucien, the wretched prisoner was spending his time as follows: As he passed through the wicket, the poet stated at the record office that M. Camusot had given him permission to write, and asked for pens, ink and paper. M. Camusot's usher whispered a word in the warden's ear, and a turnkey was immediately given orders to fulfil the request. During the few minutes which the turnkey required to collect the requisite articles and deliver them at Lucien's door, that unhappy young man, to whom the thought of confrontation with Jacques Collin seemed insupportable, sank into one of those fatal meditations wherein the idea of suicide, to which he had already yielded without accomplishing his purpose, reaches the proportions of madness. According to several distinguished physicians who have made a specialty of mental disease, suicide, in certain organizations, is the termination of insanity; but since his arrest, this determination had remained fixed in Lucien's brain. Esther's letter, reread many times, increased his longing for death, and recalled to his mind how Romeo had at length been restored to his Juliet. This is what he wrote:

"THIS IS MY TESTAMENT.

"The Conciergerie,

"This fifteenth day of May, 1830.

"I, the undersigned, do give and bequeath to the children of my sister, Madame Ève Chardon, wife of David Séchard, formerly a printer in Angoulême, and of M. David Séchard, all my property, whether personal or otherwise, which shall belong to me on the day of my death, deduction being made for payments and for legacies which I request my testamentary executor to arrange.

"I beg of M. de Sérizy to accept the charge of becoming my testamentary executor.

Payment is to be made: 1° To the Abbé Carlos Herrera the sum of three hundred thousand francs. 2° To the Baron de Nucingen, that of fourteen hundred thousand francs, which is to be diminished by the sum of seven hundred and fifty thousand francs in case that the money stolen from the domicile of Mademoiselle Esther be recovered.

" I give and bequeath, as heir of Mademoiselle Esther Gobseck, the sum of seven hundred and sixty thousand francs to the alms houses of Paris, to be devoted to the purpose of founding an asylum to be set apart for the use of fallen women who wish to abandon their career of vice and of perdition.

"Furthermore, I bequeath to the alms houses the sum necessary for the purchase of five per cent bonds yielding thirty thousand francs a year;

whereof the annual interest is to be devoted twice each year to the deliverance of persons imprisoned for debt, whose obligations amount at the most to two thousand francs. The administrators of the alms houses shall make their choice from among the most honorable of the imprisoned debtors.

"I request M. de Sérizy to devote a sum of forty thousand francs to raising a monument to the memory of Mademoiselle Esther in the Cemetery of the East, and I earnestly request to be buried by her side. This tomb is to be made after the fashion of ancient monuments; it shall be square, figures of us both carved in white marble shall lie upon its surface; the heads reclining upon cushions, the hands joined and pointed toward heaven. This monument shall have no inscription.

"I request M. the Count de Sérizy to give to M. Eugène de Rastignac, as a souvenir, the dressing-table that will be found in my house.

"Lastly, in virtue of his position, I request my testamentary executor to accept the gift which I make him of my library.

"LUCIEN CHARDON DE RUBEMPRÉ."

This testament was inclosed within a letter addressed to the Count de Granville, attorney-general of the Royal Court at Paris, which ran as follows:

"Monsieur le Count:

"I intrust my will to your keeping. When you unfold this letter I shall have ceased to be. In my

desire to recover my liberty I have answered so pusillanimously the crafty questions of M. Camusot, that in spite of my innocence, I can be incriminated in a disgraceful trial. Even in case I were acquitted without spot, life would still be impossible in the face of a captious world.

"Give, I beg you, the enclosed letter to the Abbé Carlos Herrera, unopened, and forward to M. Camusot's hands the formal retraction which is included within this cover.

"I do not think that my gaolers will dare open a packet which is addressed to you. Trusting in this, I bid you good-bye, offering you my respects for the last time and asking you to believe that in writing to you I give you a token of my gratitude for all the kindnesses which you have heaped upon your dead servant,

"LUCIEN DE R."

"TO THE ABBÉ CARLOS HERRERA.

"My Dear Abbé:

"From you I have received naught but benefits, and yet I have betrayed you. This involuntary ingratitude kills me, and when you read these lines I shall have ceased to live; you cannot be at my side to save me.

"You have given me full permission to ruin you and to cast you from me like the butt of a cigar, if by so doing I might secure some advantage for myself; but I have sacrificed you stupidly. Simply to

extricate himself from danger, deceived by an artful question of the judge, I, your spiritual son,—whom you have adopted, has ranged himself in the ranks of those who wish to murder you at any cost by establishing a false identity between you and a French scoundrel. This is the whole story.

"Between a man of your power and me,—whom you wished to make more great than I could ever have been, there must be no exchange of idle reproaches at this moment of eternal separation. You desired to make me powerful and glorious; you have hurled me into the abyss of suicide; this is all. It is a long time since I have ceased to hear the whirr of the mighty wings of giddiness swooping down upon me.

"There is the posterity of Cain as well as that of Abel, as you have sometimes said. In the great drama of humanity, Cain is the enemy. You are descended from Adam by that line whose flame the devil has fanned unceasingly since its first spark fell upon Eve. Among the demons of this race there appear from time to time terrible beings whose vast organizations contain the sum of all the powers of man, and who are like those restless beasts of the desert that need the immense solitudes they inhabit. Creatures like these are as dangerous to society as lions turned loose in the heart of Normandy. They need a pasturage, they devour common men and browse upon the money of fools. Their very games are so perilous that at length they kill the meek dog which they have chosen for a companion, for

an idol. When God so wills it, these mysterious beings are Moses, Attila, Charlemagne, Mohammed, or Napoleon; but when he lets these gigantic instruments rust at the bottom of the ocean of a generation, they are but Pugatcheff, Fouché, Louvel, or the Abbé Carlos Herrera. Endued with boundless influence over sensitive souls, they attract them and grind them to powder. It is great, in its way it is beautiful. It is the venomous plant of gorgeous colors which fascinates children in the woods. It is the poetry of evil. Men such as you should dwell in caverns and never come forth. You have made me live this giant life and I have finished my full measure of existence. Thus I may draw my neck from the gordian knots of your projects to slip it into the running noose of my cravat.

"To repair my fault I transmit to the attorney-general a full retraction of my examination.—You will find this document of advantage to you.

"By the wish formally expressed in my testament, you will receive the sums belonging to your order, which you have very imprudently expended in my behalf, on account of the fatherly affection which you have displayed toward me.

"Adieu, then, adieu, mighty statue of Evil and of Corruption. Adieu, you who, in the path of right, might have been more than Ximenès, more than Richelieu! You have kept your promises; once more I find myself such as I was upon the bank of the Charente after having owed to you the

enchantments of a dream; but, unhappily, it is no longer the river of my native place wherein I was about to drown all my boyhood's sins; it is the Seine, and my pit is a cell of the Conciergerie.

"Do not regret me; my contempt for you was as great as my admiration.

"LUCIEN."

"DEPOSITION.

"I, the undersigned, declare that I retract every word that is contained in the examination which M. Camusot forced me to undergo this day.

"The Abbé Carlos Herrera was very apt to call himself my spiritual father, and I allowed myself to be deceived by this word, understood by the judge in another sense, doubtless by mistake.

"I know that for political ends, in order to bury certain secrets which concern the cabinets both of Spain and of the Tuileries, obscure agents of diplomacy are endeavoring to identify the Abbé Carlos Herrera with a convict named Jacques Collin; but the Abbé Carlos Herrera has made me his confidant in this respect only so far as regards his efforts to procure authentic proof of the death or the existence of Jacques Collin."

"The Conciergerie, this fifteenth day of May, 1830.

"LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRÉ."

The fever of suicide lent Lucien great clearness of ideas, and that dexterity of hand which authors

know when they are a prey to the fever of composition. The change wrought in him was so great that these four documents were written within the space of half an hour. He made the papers into a packet, closed it by means of wafers, and stamped upon it the impress of his arms from the ring he wore upon his finger with the feverish strength of delirium. Surely it would have been difficult to behave with more dignity in the false situation into which a life of infamy had plunged Lucien; he was saving his memory from opprobrium, and repairing the evil which he had done his accomplice so far as the wit's cleverness could efface the effects of the poet's disclosure.

Had Lucien been confined in one of the solitary cells he would have been encountered at the outset by the impossibility of accomplishing his design, for these boxes of freestone have no other furniture than a kind of camp-bed and a bucket. There is not a nail, not a chair, not even a stool. The bed is so firmly fixed that it cannot be moved without an operation which would probably alarm the turnkey, for the iron-bound peep-hole is always open. As a further safeguard, whenever the prisoner arouses suspicion he is carefully watched by a gendarme or detective. In the apartments of the pistole, as in that which Lucien occupied on account of the consideration which the judge thought fit to show toward a young man belonging to the best society in Paris, the movable bed, the table and the chair are of service in effecting a suicide, although

they do not render it an easy matter. Lucien wore a long, blue silk cravat, and as he walked back from the examination his mind was already meditating upon the manner in which Pichegru had met a more or less voluntary death. To hang himself a man must have a fixture from which the rope can depend and sufficient space between his body and the ground to prevent his feet from receiving any support. The window of Lucien's cell, looking out upon the prison yard, was without a sash, while the iron bars clamped to the exterior of the wall, did not lend themselves to his purpose.

Lucien's rapid investigation speedily suggested this plan to consummate his suicide. If the screen that covered the aperture cut off Lucien's view of the prison yard, this screen likewise prevented the guards from perceiving what was happening within the cell; although in the lower part of the window the glass had been replaced by two stout planks, the upper portion still preserved small lights held in place by the crossbars which framed in the glass. By standing upon his table Lucien could reach the glazed division of his window, and remove or break two lights in such a way as to make of the angle of the lowest crossbar a support strong enough to bear his weight. His design was to pass his cravat over this, wind it once about his neck, knot it firmly and kick the table from beneath his feet.

Lucien pushed the table noiselessly toward the window; he took off his coat and waistcoat, and then without hesitation stepped upon the table to

break the pane above and that below the lowest crossbar. When he stood upon the table he could look out upon the prison yard, a magical sight of which he now caught sight for the first time. The warden of the Conciergerie, having received instructions from Camusot to treat Lucien with the utmost consideration, had ordered the gendarmes to lead their prisoner through the interior passages of the Conciergerie, the entrance of which is in the dark vault opposite the Tour d'Argent, and thus to avoid exhibiting the young and elegant Lucien to the crowd of criminals who are always walking in the prison yard. The reader will judge whether this scene is of a nature to print a deep impression on a poet's soul.

The yard of the Conciergerie is bounded upon the quay by the Tour d'Argent and by the Tour Bonbec; and its extent is plainly marked from without by the space which separates them. The gallery, named after Saint Louis, which leads from the Galerie Marchande to the Court of Appeals and to the Tour Bonbec, where tradition still points to the closet of Saint Louis, can describe to accurate observers the extent of the prison yard, with which it is of equal length. The solitary cells and the pistoles are situated beneath the Galerie Marchande. Thus the Queen Marie Antoinette, whose dungeon lies beneath the present solitary cells, was led to the revolutionary tribunal then sitting in the solemn court of audience of the Court of Appeals by means of a gloomy stairway now condemned, built

against the massive walls that uphold the Galerie Marchande. One side of the prison yard, that of which the first story is occupied by the Galerie de Saint Louis, displays a long line of Gothic columns, and between these the architects of some epoch have constructed a double tier of cells, designed to accommodate the greatest possible number of prisoners, and have covered with plaster, bars and bolts the capitals, arches and the shafts of this magnificent gallery. Beneath the so-called cabinet of Saint Louis, in the Tour Bonbec, a spiral stair winds up to these cells. This prostitution of one of the grandest monuments of France is hideous to see.

From the height at which Lucien was placed, looking obliquely from his window, he could view this gallery and the details of the building which connects the Tour d'Argent with the Tour Bonbec; he saw the pointed roofs of the two towers. He stood in silent wonder; his death was delayed by his admiration. In our time the phenomena of hallucination are so freely admitted by physicians that this mirage of our senses, this curious faculty of our minds, is no longer contestable. Beneath the impulse of a feeling, raised by its intensity to the height of a monomania, a man falls into the same condition that is produced by opium, haschisch, or protoxyde of azote. At such times spectres and phantoms arise, dreams become incarnate in bodily forms, things long destroyed revive in their ancient shapes. That which within the brain lived but as an idea, becomes an animated and living creature.

Modern science believes that beneath the strain of this paroxysm of passion, the brain is suffused with blood and that this congestion produces the alarming creations of waking dreams, so strongly does it object to considering thought as a live and generating force.—See *Louis Lambert,* Philosophical Studies.—Lucien beheld the palace in all its primitive beauty. The colonnade was slender, young, fresh. The dwelling of Saint Louis reappeared as it had been of old, and he marveled at its Babylonian proportions and its oriental fancifulness. He received the glorious vision as a poetic adieu to civilized creation. As he prepared to die, he asked himself why this marvel had so long existed unknown in Paris. There were two Luciens, Lucien, the poet, walking through the Middle Ages beneath the arcades and turrets of Saint Louis; and Lucien, preparing for suicide.

Just as M. de Granville had given his final instructions to his young secretary, the warden of the Conciergerie appeared, and the expression of his countenance foretold misfortune to the attorney-general.

"Have you met M. Camusot?" he asked.

"No sir," replied the warden. "His clerk, Coquart, told me to relax the severity of the Abbé Carlos' confinement and to release M. de Rubempré altogether; but it is too late."

"Good God! What has happened?"

"Here, sir," said the warden, "is a packet of

letters for you which will explain the catastrophe. The sentinel in the prison yard heard the sound of breaking glass coming from the pistole, and a prisoner in the next cell to M. Lucien's shrieked aloud for he could hear the death agony of the poor young man. The sentinel returned pale with fright at the sight which he had seen. The prisoner had hung himself from the sash by means of his cravat."

Although the warden was speaking in a low voice, the terrible cry that Madame de Sérizy uttered proved that in the crises of life our organs are endowed with incalculable power. The countess heard or divined the truth. Before M. de Granville could turn round, before her husband or M. Bauvan could block her rapid course, the countess darted like an arrow through the doorway, reached the Galerie Marchande, and rushed through it as far as the staircase which leads to the rue de la Barillerie.

A barrister was taking off his gown before the door of one of those shops which for so many years encumbered the gallery with their busy trade in shoes and caps and gowns. The countess asked the way to the Conciergerie.

"Go down and turn to the left. The entrance is on the quai de l'Horloge, in the first arcade."

"The woman's mad!" said the shop-girl, "you must follow her."

Nobody could have followed Léontine; she flew. A doctor must explain how these women of society, whose strength has long been unexercised, can find

such a reserve of power at the great crises of life. The countess dashed through the arcade toward the wicket so swiftly that the gendarme on duty did not see her pass. She flung herself against the grating like a feather whirled by some mighty wind; she shook the iron bars with such fury that one of them snapped in her hands; she crushed her breast against the jagged points until the blood spurted, and then she fell to the ground, crying, "Open! open!" in a voice at which the guards shuddered.

The turnkey ran to the gate.

"Open! I am sent by the attorney-general to *save the dead.*"—

As the countess was making this detour by the rue de la Barillerie and the quay de l'Horloge, M de Granville and M. de Sérizy, guessing her intention, hurried to the Conciergerie through the interior of the palace, but in spite of their haste, they did not arrive until the moment when the gendarmes, whom the noise had summoned from their guard room, were raising the fallen body of the countess who had fainted before the outer wicket. On the appearance of the warden of the Conciergerie the wicket opened and the countess was carried into the record office. Springing suddenly to her feet Léontine clasped her hands and fell upon her knees.

"To see him, only to see him! Oh, gentlemen, I shall do no harm; if you don't wish to see me die before your eyes let me look at Lucien, living or dead. Ah! my dear husband, you are there too. Choose between my death or—"

She sank to the floor.

"You are good," she murmured; "I will love you."

"Carry her away," said M. de Bauvan.

"No, let us go to Lucien's cell," said M. de Granville, reading M. de Sérizy's intention in his disordered look.

He caught hold of the countess, raised her to her feet and supported her by one arm while M. de Bauvan upheld her by the other.

"Sir," said M. de Sérizy to the warden, "be silent as death in regard to all this."

"Rely upon me," replied the warden. "You have acted wisely. This lady—"

"Is my wife."

"Ah! Pardon me, sir. She is certain to faint when she sees the young man, and while she is unconscious she can be taken to a carriage."

"I thought of that," said the count; "send one of your men to the Cour de Harlay to tell my grooms to come to the wicket. My carriage is there, alone."

"We can save him," said the countess, walking with a courage and strength that amazed her friends. "He can be brought back to life—"

She dragged the two magistrates along, crying out to the keeper:

"On; on, faster! Every second is worth the lives of three men!"

When the cell door was opened, and the countess saw Lucien hanging as though his garments were suspended from a peg, she bounded toward him to

seize and clasp him to her; but, suddenly she fell face downward upon the floor of the cell, uttering shrieks that were stifled by a rattle in her throat. Five minutes later she was lying in the count's carriage on her way to her hotel, stretched at full length on one of the cushions, while her husband knelt at her side. The Count de Bauvan had hurried for a physician to bring timely relief to the countess.

The warden of the Conciergerie examined the outer grating of the wicket, and said to his clerk:

"No expense has been spared! The iron bars were forged; they have been tested, and cost dear enough, too; yet there was a flaw in that spike!"

When the attorney-general reached his office he was obliged to give other instructions to his secretary. Luckily Massol had not yet returned.

A few moments after the departure of M. de Granville, who had hastened off to see M. de Sérizy, Massol arrived to find his fellow barrister, De Chargebœuf, in the attorney-general's office.

"My friend," said the young secretary, "if you wish to do me a favor, you will insert in to-morrow's number of your *Gazette* the lines that I am going to dictate to you in the place which you assign to judicial news. Print at the head of the column. Write!"

He dictated as follows:

"It has been fully proved that Mademoiselle Esther Gobseck killed herself voluntarily.

"The satisfactory alibi of M. Lucien de Rubempré and his complete innocence make his arrest still more a matter of regret, inasmuch as, at the moment when the examining judge was on the point of giving orders for his release, the young man died very suddenly."

"I have no need," said the young lawyer to Massol, "to recommend to you the utmost discretion in the small service which is asked of you."

"Since *you* do me the honor of placing your confidence in me," replied Massol, "I will take the liberty of making a suggestion. This notice will lead to disagreeable imputations upon justice."

"Justice will be strong enough to support them," replied the young novice of the bar with all the pride of a future magistrate educated by M. de Granville.

"My dear sir, if you will allow me, I can avoid this mishap by two sentences.

The barrister wrote as follows:

"The forms of justice have nothing to do with this melancholy event. The autopsy which took place immediately proved that death was due to the rupture of an aneurism in its last stage. Had M. de Rubempré been affected by his arrest, his death would have taken place much sooner than it actually did. But we believe we can safely affirm that far from being afflicted by his arrest, this much-lamented young man laughed at it, and told the

gendarmes who had escorted him from Fontainebleau to Paris that his innocence was certain to be recognized the instant that he should be taken before a magistrate."

"Does not that avert all danger?"—demanded the barrister-journalist.

"You are right."

"The attorney-general will be very much pleased with you to-morrow," replied Massol, adroitly.

And now for most readers, and especially for the more fastidious, this study, perhaps, seems quite completed by the deaths of Esther and of Lucien; perhaps, however, Jacques Collin, Asia, Europe and Paccard are of sufficient interest to induce the reader to follow their fortunes to the end. This last act of the drama may, moreover, complete the picture of manners and customs so far as the limits of this story will allow, and finish the story of divers fortunes, still untold, which Lucien's life has so curiously interwoven, mingling some of the vilest figures of the galleys with persons in the highest walks of life we have seen.

Thus we have seen that the greatest events of human life are exemplified by the pettiest details of life in Paris, whether they are true or false; and the same truth holds good of many things far more august than these.

THE LAST INCARNATION OF VAUTRIN

THE LAST INCARNATION OF VAUTRIN

*

"What is the matter, Madeleine?" asked Madame Camusot, as her waiting-maid entered her chamber, with that troubled expression which servants assume at critical seasons.

"Madame," replied Madeleine, "M. Camusot has just returned from the palace; but he looks so upset and miserable that perhaps madame had better go at once to see him."

"Did he say anything?" asked Madame Camusot.

"No, madame; but we have never seen him look as he does; he will probably be very ill indeed; he is yellow; he seems to be going to pieces and—"

Without waiting for the end of this sentence Madame Camusot rushed from the room and went to her husband's study. She found the judge seated in an arm chair, with his legs stretched rigidly in front of him, his head thrown back, his hands hanging limp at his sides, his face white, his eyes staring exactly as if he were about to swoon.

"Dearest, what is the matter with you?" asked the young wife in alarm.

"Ah! my poor Amélie, the saddest thing has happened.—It makes me shudder still. Just imagine; the attorney-general—no, Madame de Sérizy—I don't know where to begin."

"Begin at the end!"—said Madame Camusot.

"Well, then, I was in the Council Chamber of the Superior Court. M. Popinot had just written the last requisite signature at the conclusion of my report of insufficient evidence which was to give Lucien de Rubempré his liberty; in fact everything was over, the clerk was carrying away the minutes of the proceedings, I was just about to wash my hands of the whole affair, when suddenly in comes the president of the tribunal and examines the verdict.

" 'You are releasing a corpse,' said he, with cold irony; 'this young man has gone, to use M. de Bonald's expression, before his natural judge. He has been struck dead by a violent attack of apoplexy.'

"—I breathed more freely, supposing that it was an accident.

"—'If I understand aright, sir,' said M. Popinot to the president, 'it was an attack of apoplexy like Pichegru's.—

"—'Gentlemen,' continued the president, in his grave manner, 'you must know that, so far as the world is concerned, young Lucien de Rubempré has died through the rupture of an aneurism.'

"We all looked at one another.

"—'High interests are entangled in this sad affair,' said the president; 'God grant, for your sake, M. Camusot, although you have but done your duty, that Madame de Sérizy does not go mad from the blow which she received; she was carried away more dead than alive. I have just

met our attorney-general in a state of despair painful to see.—My dear Camusot,' he added in my ear, 'you took the wrong tack that time.'

"So, my dearest, when I was ready to come away, I could scarcely walk. My legs were trembling so that I dared not venture into the street, and I went into my office to lie down, and then Coquart, who was arranging the documents of this unlucky trial, told me how a beautiful lady had taken the Conciergerie by storm; how she had tried to save Lucien, with whom she is madly in love, and how she fainted dead away when she saw him hanging by his cravat from the window-sash in his cell. The thought that the manner in which I examined this unhappy young man—who, between you and me, was clearly guilty—had been the cause of his suicide, has pursued me from the moment I left the palace, and I have been on the point of fainting ever since."

"So, you are going to think yourself a murderer because a prisoner hangs himself in prison? just as you were about to release him?"—cried Madame Camusot. "A judge in your position is like a general who has had a horse shot under him.—That's all."

"My dear, these comparisons are at the best but jokes, and this is no time for joking, in this case *death kills life.* Our hopes are buried in Lucien's coffin."

"Really?"—said Madame Camusot with an accent of profound irony.

"Yes; my career is over. I shall remain all my life long a mere judge of the Tribunal of the Seine. Even before this fatal event, M. de Granville was very dissatisfied with the turn which the examination was taking; but his speech to our president makes me certain that so long as M. de Granville is attorney-general, I shall never be promoted!"

Promotion! That is a terrible word; an idea which in our era transforms the magistrate into the functionary.

In former times the magistrate had already received all the honors he had a right to expect. Three or four presidencies of Chambers satisfied the ambitious spirits of each parliament. A counsellorship contented a De Brosses as well as a Molé, either at Dijon or at Paris. This position, a fortune in itself, required a great fortune to be maintained with dignity. In Paris, outside of parliament, lawyers can aspire to but three great prizes: the comptroller-generalcy, the seals, and the chancellor's robe. Below the dignity of the parliamentary sphere, the deputy of a Court of Judicature considered himself a personage of sufficient distinction to rest upon his laurels. Contrast the position of a councillor of the Royal Court at Paris in 1829, whose entire fortune was bounded by the limits of his salary and that of a councillor of the Parliament in 1729. Vast is the difference! To-day, when money has become the universal guarantee of society, the great wealth which magistrates formerly possessed is no longer required of them; thus we

see parliamentary deputies, peers of France, heaping magistracy on magistracy, becoming judges and legislators at once, borrowing importance from positions other than those upon which alone their reputation should rest.

In a word, magistrates never cease to think of distinguishing themselves in order that they may be promoted as a man is promoted in the army or in the administration.

Even if this thought does not affect a magistrate's independence, it is too well-known, too natural, and its effects are too evident to allow the dignity of his office to remain untarnished in the public eye. The salaries paid by the state metamorphose priest and magistrate to clerks. The possibility of advancement stimulates ambition, and fosters a desire to please the powers that be, while the modern dogma of equality places the judge upon the same social footing with men who are amenable to his jurisdiction. Thus the two pillars of every social system, Religion and Law, have both grown less in this XIXth century, the so-called age of universal progress.

"Why should your chances of promotion fail?" said Amélie Camusot. She cast a mocking glance at her husband; for she felt the necessity of encouraging the tool of her ambitious hopes.

"Why do you despair?" continued she with a gesture which painted her indifference to the prisoner's death. "This suicide will rejoice Lucien's two enemies, Madam d'Espard and her cousin, the

Countess du Châtelet. Madame d'Espard is most intimate with the Keeper of the Seals; and through her you can obtain an audience with His Excellency and tell him the secret of this affair. If the Minister of Justice is on your side what have you to fear from your president or from the attorney-general?"

"But the Count and Countess de Sérizy!"—cried the poor judge. "I tell you that Madame de Sérizy is stark mad; and mad, they tell me, by my fault."

"If she is mad, most injudicious judge," exclaimed Madame Camusot, laughing, "she cannot harm you. Tell me all the particulars of the day."

"Great heaven!" replied Camusot, "just after I had heard the unhappy young man's confession and when he had declared that this so-called Spanish priest is actually Jacques Collin, the Duchess de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy sent me a valet with a brief note requesting me not to examine him. All was over—"

"You must have lost your senses," said Amélie, "for, as you can rely upon your secretary, you might have recalled Lucien and by a little encouragement it would have been easy to make him alter his deposition."

"You are exactly like Madame de Sérizy in your contempt of law!" retorted Camusot, who could not bring himself to make a mockery of his profession. "Madame de Sérizy seized my reports and tossed them into the fire!"

"She's a woman to be proud of! bravo!" exclaimed Madame Camusot.

"Madame de Sérizy told me that she had rather blow up the palace than suffer a young man who had stood high in the good graces of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse and in her own to appear at the bar of the Court of Assizes side by side with a convict!"—

"But, Camusot," said Amélie, who could not restrain a smile of superiority, "your position is glorious."—

"Oh! yes. Glorious!"

"You have done your duty."—

"Yes, but most unfortunately and contrary to the jesuitical advice of M. de Granville, who met me on the quai Malaquais—"

"This morning?"

"This morning."

"At what time?"

"At nine o'clock."

"Oh! Camusot!" said Amélie, wringing her hands and clasping them together. "To think how many times I have warned you to take care of everything. Good heavens! it's not a man that I am dragging after me, but a load of stone.—But, Camusot, your attorney-general was waiting for you on your way,—then he must have recommended some course."

"Yes;—he did."

"And you did not understand him! If you are deaf, you will remain an examining judge with nobody to examine as long as you live. Kindly have sense enough to listen to me," she added, silencing

her husband, who wished to defend himself. "You think that the game is up."

Camusot looked at his wife with the expression of a peasant staring at a juggler.

"If the Duchess de Maufrigneuse and the Countess de Sérizy are compromised, they must both become your protectresses," continued Amélie. Madame d'Espard will obtain an audience for you with the Keeper of the Seals; you can tell him your secret, and he will make use of it to amuse the King; for all sovereigns like to know the seamy side of things, and to learn the real motives of events which the public gapes at in amazement. From thenceforth all danger from M. de Sérizy and the attorney-general will be at an end—"

"What a blessing it is to have such a wife!" exclaimed the judge, more cheerfully. "After all, I have unearthed Jacques Collin, and I shall send him to settle his accounts with the Court of Assizes. It is a victory in the career of an examining judge, that—"

"Camusot," interrupted Amélie, delighted to see her husband recovering from the moral and physical prostration into which the news of Lucien's suicide had plunged him. "The president told you just now, that you had taken the wrong tack and now you have tacked too far in the opposite direction.—You are further from your course than ever, my dear!"

The examining judge stood looking at his wife with an air of stupefaction.

"The King and the Keeper of the Seals may be glad to learn the secret of this trial and at the same time be displeased to see lawyers of the liberal party dragging to the bar of public opinion and of the Court of Assizes, in their pleas, such names as Sérizy, Maufrigneuse and Grandlieu, in short all those who are involved directly or indirectly in this case."

"Every one of them is incriminated—I have them!" exclaimed Camusot.

The judge, who had risen from his seat, paced up and down his study floor as Sganarelle does upon the stage when he is trying to extricate himself from some scrape.

"Listen to me, Amélie!" said the judge, halting before his wife, "a circumstance comes back to my mind which, trivial as it seems, is of capital importance in my present position. Picture to yourself, dearest, this Jacques Collin, a colossus of craft, dissimulation, and of deceit,—a man of such depth—what can I call him?—The Cromwell of the galleys!—I have never met so shrewd a rascal; he came within an ace of hoodwinking me. —But in criminal examinations a chance thread leads to a skein which guides a man through the labyrinth of the darkest conscience and the most deeply-hidden facts. When Jacques Collin noticed that I was skimming over the papers seized in Lucien de Rubempré's lodgings, the crafty rogue glanced at them as if he were looking to see whether some particular packet were among them,

and he allowed a gesture of evident satisfaction to escape him. This look of a thief estimating a treasure, this prisoner's gesture, which meant, 'I have my weapons,' taught me a world of things. It is only you women who, like judges and prisoners, can gather from a single glance whole histories of fraud more complex than a system of prison locks. Volumes of suspicion are read in a single second! It is frightful; life or death in the twinkling of an eye. 'The villain has other letters in his power,' thought I; and then the thousand and one other details of the case absorbed my attention. I passed by this incident because I expected to bring my prisoners face to face, and to clear up this matter at a later stage of the examination. But we may consider it certain that Jacques Collin has stowed away in some safe spot, after the fashion of these wretches, the most compromising letters of this young Apollo who was adored with so much—"

"And yet you tremble, Camusot! You will be president of a Chamber in the Royal Court much sooner than I expected!" cried Madame Camusot, whose face beamed with delight. "Mark my words, you must behave so as to satisfy everybody; for this trial has become so important that it might be *stolen* from us!—Did they not take the case out of M. Popinot's hands to entrust it to yours, at the time when Madame d'Espard applied for an injunction against her husband?" continued Amélie, in answer to her husband's gesture of astonishment. "Now, can't the attorney-

general, who takes such a lively interest in the honor of the Count de Sérizy and his wife, transfer the case to the Royal Court and intrust it to a councillor of his own choosing, so that the whole process may begin afresh.—"

"My dearest wife, where did you learn your criminal law?" cried Camusot. "You know everything, you are my master—"

"What! can't you see that to-morrow morning M. de Granville will be alarmed at the probable action of some liberal lawyer? Jacques Collin will have no trouble in finding one, for any of them would gladly pay him for the right to be his counsel! These ladies know their danger quite as well, if not better, than you; they will make a confidant of the attorney-general, who sees already how close these families are to the prisoner's dock on account of the intimacy between this convict and Lucien de Rubempré, the accepted suitor of Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, Lucien the lover of Esther, the former flame of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, the idol of Madame de Sérizy. You must, therefore, manœuvre in such a way as to win the affection of your attorney-general and the gratitude of M. de Sérizy, of the Marchioness d'Espard and of the Countess du Châtelet alike, to reinforce the duchess' protection by that of the house of Grandlieu, and to invite the commendation of your president. The countess, the duchess, and Madame Grandlieu will be my care; it is yours to see the attorney-general to-morrow morning. M. de Granville does not live with

his wife; for the past dozen years he has had a mistress, Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille. She has borne him children, has she not? This magistrate is no saint; he is a man like the rest of you; he can be seduced; there is some way to gain a hold upon him. You must discover his weak point, flatter him, ask his advice, point out to him the danger of the case. Try to implicate him as well as yourself, and you shall—''

"No, I ought to kiss the dust beneath your feet!" said Camusot interrupting his wife, as he slipped his arm about her waist and pressed her to his heart. "Amélie, you are my saviour!"

"It was I, who dragged you from Alençon to Mantes and from Mantes to the Tribunal of the Seine," replied Amélie. "So you may trust me now! Five years hence, I wish to be spoken of as 'the president's wife;' but, my love, always think a long time before you come to a decision. A judge's calling is not like a fireman's, there's never a conflagration in your papers, you have time to reflect; thus in your place stupid mistakes are inexcusable.—''

"The strength of my position rests entirely upon the identity of the sham Spanish priest with Jacques Collin," said the judge, after a long pause. "When once this identity is firmly established, even if the court should take cognizance of the case, it will always be a fact of which no magistrate, judge or counsellor, can rid himself. I shall be like the child who has fastened an iron chain to a cat's tail; no

matter where the prosecution is conducted, it will always jangle Jacques Collin's irons."

"Bravo!" said Amélie.

"The attorney-general will be more anxious to come to terms with me while I hold this sword of Damocles suspended over the heart of the Faubourg Saint Germain than with anybody else! But you don't realize the difficulty of arriving at this glorious result! The attorney-general and I, a few minutes ago in his office, agreed to take Jacques Collin at his word, and consider him to be Carlos Herrera, canon of the Chapter of Toledo. We have agreed to recognize his capacity of diplomatic envoy and to allow him to be reclaimed by the Spanish Ambassador. It was in accordance with this plan that I signed the order for Lucien de Rubempré's release, and that I began a fresh examination of my prisoners, making them appear white as snow. To-morrow de Rastignac, Bianchon, and I don't know who besides, must be confronted with the self-styled canon of the Royal Chapter of Toledo; they will not recognize in him Jacques Collin, whose arrest took place in their presence some ten years ago, in a family boarding house, where they had known him under the name of Vautrin."

There was a moment's pause, while Madame Camusot reflected.

"Are you positive that your prisoner is Jacques Collin?" she asked.

"Positive," replied the judge, "and so is the attorney-general."

"Then try to create some excitement in the Palais de Justice, but take care to keep your claws well covered up. If your man is still in solitary confinement go instantly to the warden of the Conciergerie and make arrangements to have the convict publicly recognized. Instead of imitating children, imitate the ministers of police in absolute monarchies, who invent conspiracies against the sovereign in order to gain the credit of thwarting them, and so to render themselves indispensable. Put three families in danger in order to reap the glory of saving them."

"Ah! how lucky!" cried Camusot; "my brain is in such confusion that I had forgotten one circumstance. The order to remove Jacques Collin to the pistole was carried by Coquart to M. Gault, the warden of the Conciergerie. But, through the solicitude of Bibi Lupin, Jacques Collin's enemy, three criminals who know him personally have been transferred from the Force to the Conciergerie; and, if he enters the prison yard to-morrow morning, terrible scenes are anticipated—"

"Why?"

"Jacques Collin, my dear, is the depositary of considerable sums of money entrusted to him by prisoners, which he is accused of having squandered to support the luxury of the late Lucien; and they are going to demand a strict account. Bibi Lupin told me that there will be a butchery if the guards don't interfere; at any rate the secret will be disclosed. Jacques Collin's life will be at stake.

By going to the palace early in the morning, I shall be able to draw up a formal report of his identity."

"Ah! if his creditors would take him off your hands, you would be looked upon as a master workman, indeed. Don't go to M. de Granville's house; wait for him at his office with this dreadful weapon. It is a cannon leveled against the three most important families of the court and peerage. Be bold; suggest to M. de Granville to rid you of Jacques Collin by transferring him to the Force, where convicts need no schooling to make away with informers. I, myself, shall go to the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, who will take me to see the Grandlieus. Possibly I shall see M. de Sérizy as well. Trust to me to spread the alarm everywhere. We'll agree on some message for you to write me in case the Spanish priest is formally recognized as Jacques Collin. Make your arrangements to leave the palace at two o'clock; I shall arrange a private audience for you with the Keeper of the Seals; perhaps he will be at Madame d'Espard's house."

Camusot stood, with his legs planted wide apart, lost in such admiration that the ingenious Amélie smiled.

"Come to dinner, and be gay," said she, in conclusion. "Do you realize that we have scarcely been two years in Paris, and here you are on the high road to a counsellorship before the year is out.—From there, my dear, you will pass on to the presidency of one of the chambers of the court, for

the gap is none too wide to be bridged over by some political service.

This secret deliberation shows how deeply the actions and the slightest words of Jacques Collin, the lowest actor in this drama, affected the honor of the families in whose bosoms he had placed his dead Lucien.

*

The death of Lucien and the attack upon the Conciergerie by the Countess de Sérizy had so clogged the wheels of that machine that the warden had forgotten to remove the counterfeit priest from his solitary cell.

Although there had been more than one example in judiciary annals of a prisoner's death during his trial, yet this occurrence was so rare that on the present occasion guards, clerk, and warden alike, had laid aside their ordinary calm. Nevertheless, for them, the great event was not the transformation of a handsome young prisoner into a lifeless body, but rather that a wrought iron bar of the outer gate had snapped in the delicate hands of a fashionable woman. Thus, the moment that the attorney-general and the Count Octave de Bauvan had departed in the Count de Sérizy's carriage, taking with them his unconscious wife; warden, clerk, and turnkeys hurried to the wicket, escorting M. Lebrun, the prison doctor, who had been summoned to verify Lucien's death and to hold a consultation with the *Physician of the Dead* of the district where that unfortunate young man had lived.

In Paris, the *Physician of the Dead* is the name given to the doctor of the mayoralty, whose duty it is to confirm all deaths and to ascertain their causes.

With rapid and characteristic decision, M. de

Granville had judged it necessary for the honor of the families concerned, that the official report of Lucien's death be drawn up at the mayoralty of the quai of Malaquais, the district in which the dead man had resided, and that the body be carried from Lucien's own dwelling to the Church of Saint-Germain des Prés, where the funeral service was to take place. M. de Chargebœuf, M. de Granville's secretary, was summoned, and received orders in this regard. Preparations were begun for the removal of the body during the night. The young secretary was directed to make immediate arrangements with the authorities, the church and the undertakers. Thus, for the world, Lucien must seem to have died a free man in his own house. The funeral procession was to start from his door and his friends were to be invited to attend the ceremony.

At the moment when Camusot, with his mind at rest, was sitting down to table with his ambitious helpmate, the warden of the Conciergerie and M. Lebrun, the prison doctor, were standing outside the wicket deploring the fragility of iron bars and the strength of amorous women.

"It is not known," the doctor was saying to M. Gault, as he was about to take his leave, "what limit there is to the nervous power of a man under the excitement of excessive passion. Dynamics and mathematics are without either figures or tables by which this force might be computed. Why only yesterday I was witness of an experiment which frightened me, and which illustrates the terrible

physical power this little woman just now displayed."

"Tell me about it," said M. Gault; "I have the weakness to take an interest in mesmerism; although I do not believe in it, still it puzzles me."

"A mesmeric physician, for there are persons among us who believe in mesmerism," continued Doctor Lebrun, "proposed to me to make upon myself an experiment of a phenomenon which he had described to me and which I doubted. Curious to see with my own eyes one of those strange, nervous crises by which they prove the existence of mesmerism, I consented. This is what happened. I should like to know what our academy of medicine would say if its members one after another submitted to this action which leaves no loophole to incredulity. My old friend—

"This physician," continued Dr. Lebrun, beginning a parenthesis, "is an old man who has been persecuted for his belief by the Faculty since Mesmer's time; he is seventy-one or two years old and his name is Bouvard. To-day he is the patriarch of the doctrine of animal magnetism. He has always treated me as his son, and I owe my position to his kindness. Well then, this elderly and respectable Bouvard proposed to me to prove that the nervous force aroused by the mesmerist was not infinite, for man is subject to determinate laws; but that it acts like natural forces whose complete principles escape our calculations.

"'Thus,' said he to me, 'if you will consent to

place your wrist in the hand of a somnambulist, who in the waking state could not press it beyond a certain appreciable force, you will admit that in the condition so absurdly called somnambulistic, her fingers can gripe like a locksmith's pincers!'

"Thus, sir, when I had placed my wrist within the woman's hand—the woman was not *asleep*, for Bouvard disapproves of this expression; but *isolated*—and when the old doctor had bidden her to squeeze my wrist indefinitely with all her strength, I was obliged to implore her to stop, for I felt the blood on the point of spurting from the tips of my fingers. Please look at this bracelet which I shall wear for more than three months."

"The devil!" exclaimed M. Gault, as he looked at a livid band which resembled the scar of a burn.

"My dear Gault," continued the doctor, "had my flesh been clinched in an iron band, and had a blacksmith constantly twisted it more tightly by a screw, I should not have felt the metal circlet as painful as were this woman's fingers; her grip was of inflexible steel, and I am perfectly certain that she might have broken the bones and severed hand from the wrist. This pressure began almost imperceptibly, and continued without relaxation, adding continuously new force to its former pressure. I tell you, sir, no tourniquet could have done better service than this hand metamorphosed into an instrument of torture. It appeared to me, then, quite certain, that under the domination of passion, which is but the will concentrated upon a single

point, and reaching an incalculable quantity of animal force—like all the different varieties of electric power—man can bring all his vitality to bear, either for attack or resistance, in such or such organs. This little woman, under the weight of her despair, concentrated all her vital power in her wrists."

"She needed a devilish amount of it to break a bar of wrought iron,"—said one of the gaolers, shaking his head.

"There was a flaw in it!" remarked M. Gault.

"I myself," continued the doctor, "dare not assign limits to nervous force. It is by this means that mothers, to save their children, mesmerize lions, climb through flames along a cornice where a cat can scarcely stand, and support the agony of some child-births. There lies the secret of the attempts of prisoners or convicts to regain their liberty. We do not yet know the limit of mortal strength, it is akin to the power of nature, and we draw from it as from unknown springs!"

"Sir," whispered a gaoler in the ear of the warden, who had escorted Dr. Lebrun to the outer wicket of the Conciergerie, "number 2, in solitary confinement, says that he is sick, and demands to see the doctor. He declares that he is going to die," added the gaoler.

"Really?" said the warden.

"There is a rattle in his throat!" replied the gaoler.

"It is five o'clock," observed the doctor; "I have

not dined yet. But, after all, I am practically there already. So we'll go."

"Number 2, in solitary confinement, is that very Spanish priest suspected of being Jacques Collin," said M. Gault to the doctor, "and one of the prisoners in the same case in which that poor young fellow was implicated."—

"I have seen him before, this morning," replied the doctor. "M. Camusot gave me directions to make a diagnosis of his condition, and, between you and me, the rascal could not be in better health. I tell you he could make his fortune by posing for a Hercules in some troop of acrobats."

"He may want to kill himself too," said M. Gault. "Let's both look in upon his cell; for I ought to go there, if it is only to have him moved to the pistole. M. Camusot has ordered me to lighten this nameless criminal's confinement—"

Jacques Collin, called Trompe-la-Mort in the world of crime, to whom henceforward we need give no name other than his own, had been, since his return to his cell, in accordance with Camusot's orders, a prey to such anxiety as he had never known during a life chequered by numberless crimes, by three escapes from prison, by two condemnations before the Court of Assizes. This man was the incarnation of the life, the strength, the cunning and the passions of the galleys; he was its very worst expression, and yet was he not rendered monstrously beautiful by an attachment worthy of the canine race, toward him whom he had made

his friend? Unpardonable, infamous and horrible on so many sides, this perfect devotion to his idol makes him so truly interesting that this Study, long as it has already been, would seem curtailed and incomplete if the last chapters of this life of crime did not follow the death of Lucien de Rubempré. The little spaniel is dead, and the reader asks whether his terrible comrade, the lion, will live!

In real life, in society, the chain of things is linked so closely that no event can happen singly. The waters of the flood form a kind of liquid sea; there is no wave, angry and towering as it may be, whose mighty crest is not submerged beneath the mass of waters which overwhelm in their swift current the rebellious gulfs, and sweep them down in their tempestuous course. Just as you may be interested in watching confused images float past you in running water, so, perhaps, you desire to measure the pressure of social power upon that whirlpool called Vautrin; to see how far from shore the turbulent wave will be overwhelmed, and to learn the destiny of this man who, however diabolical, is yet linked to humanity by love; so hard is it for this heavenly principle to perish in the most cankered hearts.

The ignoble convict, incarnating the cherished ideal of so many poets, Moore, Lord Byron, Mathurin, Canalis—a demon ruling over an angel, enticed into hell to refresh himself upon dew stolen from paradise—Jacques Collin, if we have penetrated into his brazen heart, had for seven years

renounced himself. His powerful faculties, absorbed in Lucien, were brought into being for Lucien's sake; his delight was in Lucien's progress, in his love, in his ambition. For him Lucien was his visible soul.

Trompe-la-Mort dined with the Grandlieus, glided into the boudoir of noble ladies, loved Esther by proxy. In a word he saw in Lucien a Jacques Collin, young, handsome, noble, destined to become an ambassador of France.

Trompe-la-Mort had realized the German superstition of a *double* by means of a phenomenon of moral paternity, that sensation which a woman will receive, if throughout her life she has loved sincerely, if she has felt her soul mingled with that of the man whom she adores, and has lived his life, whether it be noble or base, happy or sorrowful, obscure or glorious; if, though far away, she has suffered the throbbing of his wound, and has felt intuitively when he has fought a duel; if, to paint her by a single expression, she has had no need to be told of an infidelity to know of its existence.

When he had been replaced in his cell, Jacques Collin said to himself:

"They are examining the boy!"

He trembled; Trompe-la-Mort, who murdered as a workman drinks.

"Has he been able to see his mistresses?" he asked himself. "Did my aunt find these cursed women? Have these duchesses, these countesses

taken any steps; have they stopped the examination?—Has Lucien received my instructions?—If fate will have him examined, how will he *hold out?* Poor boy! It was I who brought him to this pass. That thief of a Paccard and that weasel, Europe, were at the bottom of the whole trouble by prigging the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs which Nucingen gave to Esther. Those two rascals have pushed us to the last notch, but they shall pay dearly for their sport. One day more and Lucien would have been rich; he would have married his Clotilde de Grandlieu. Esther would have been off my hands. Lucien was too fond of that girl, while he never could have loved our sole anchor, Clotilde—Ah! the boy might have been wholly mine! To think that our fate hangs upon a look, a blush, of Lucien before this ever-watchful Camusot, who does not lack a judge's cunning, for when he showed me the letters, our eyes met in a glance by which we sounded each other, and he divined that I can make Lucien's mistresses *sing* to any tune I wish!"

This monologue lasted for three hours. The anguish was so terrible that the prisoner required all the strength of his constitution of iron and of vitriol. Jacques Collin, whose brain was on fire with the madness of suspense, felt a thirst so insatiate that he swallowed, without perceiving it, the entire provision of water contained in one of the two buckets which, together with the bed, formed all the furniture of his cell.

"If he loses his head, what will become of him? The dear boy lacks Théodore's strength of mind!" thought he, as he lay down upon his camp bed which was like that of a guard room.

We must say a word or two concerning this Théodore, whom Jacques Collin called to mind at this supreme crisis. Théodore Calvi, a young Corsican, condemned to the galleys for life on account of eleven murders committed before he had reached the age of eighteen, had been from 1819 to 1820 the companion of Jacques Collin's chain, thanks to influence bought at the price of gold. Jacques Collin's last escape was one of his most complete combinations—he had left the prison disguised as a gendarme and leading Théodore Calvi, who walked at his side in convict's dress, as if he were on his way to see the Commissioner of Police.—This masterpiece had taken place in the seaport of Rochefort, where convicts die like sheep, and where the government had hoped that these two dangerous persons would end their lives. Companions in escape, they had been forced to separate by the dangers of their flight. Théodore had been retaken and returned to the galleys. Jacques Collin made his way to Spain; transformed himself into Carlos Herrera, and then started back toward Rochefort, in order to meet his accomplice. It was at this time that he met Lucien on the borders of the Charente. The bandit hero of Corsican forests, to whom Trompe-la-Mort owed his knowledge of the Italian tongue, was naturally sacrificed to this new idol.

Life with Lucien, a young man free from unpardonable sins, with a conscience burdened only by the peccadilloes of youth, rose before his mind beautiful and splendid as the sun of a summer's day; while, in league with Théodore, Jacques Collin could see no other perspective than the scaffold at the end of a long line of inevitable crimes.

The idea of a tragedy caused by Lucien's weakness, whose determination might well falter beneath the rigors of prison life, assumed vast proportions in Jacques Collin's brain; and as he meditated upon the possibility of a catastrophe, the unhappy wretch felt his eyes wet with tears, a strange occurrence which never since his childhood had happened in his life.

"I must have a violent fever," thought he, "and by summoning a doctor I might persuade him to put me into communication with Lucien for a handsome sum."

At this moment a turnkey entered with the prisoner's dinner.

"It's useless, my boy, I can't eat. Ask the warden to send the doctor to me. I feel so ill that I believe my last hour has come."

Hearing the rattle in the throat with which the convict accompanied this speech, the turnkey nodded and went out. Jacques Collin clung passionately to this hope; but, when he saw the doctor enter his cell in company with the warden, he felt that success was impossible, and coolly awaiting the result of the visit he let the doctor feel his pulse.

"The prisoner has fever," said the doctor to M. Gault; "but it is the fever which is common to all prisoners, and which," he added in the counterfeit Spaniard's ear, "always seems to me the proof of guilt."

At this juncture the warden, to whom the attorney-general had intrusted the letter written by Lucien to Jacques Collin, left the doctor and prisoner in the turnkey's care and went to fetch the letter.

"Sir," said Jacques Collin to the doctor, seeing the turnkey at the door and at a loss to understand the warden's departure, "I should not stickle about thirty thousand francs, if it would enable me to dispatch five lines to Lucien."

"I don't care to steal your money," replied the doctor; "nobody in this world can communicate with him longer."—

"Nobody?" exclaimed Jacques Collin in amazement, "why?"

"He has hung himself."—

Never did tigress, when she found her whelps stolen from her lair, make the jungles of India re-echo with a cry so terrible as that which Jacques Collin uttered. He sprang to his feet, as a tigress to her paws, and glared at the doctor with a look burning as the bright lightning when it strikes; then he sank back upon his bed murmuring:

"Oh! my son!"—

"Poor man!" exclaimed the doctor, moved by this terrible convulsion of nature.

In fact, this explosion was followed by such utter weakness that the words, "Oh! my son!" were but a whisper.

"Is this fellow going to die on our hands, too?" asked the turnkey.

"No, it can't be so!" continued Jacques Collin, raising himself and gazing at the two witnesses of this scene with a cold fireless eye. "You are wrong; it is not he! you mistook another. A man cannot hang himself in a solitary cell. How could I hang myself here? All Paris is answerable to me for that life! God owes it to me!"

The turnkey and the doctor, who for years had been surprised at nothing, were stupefied in their turn. M. Gault entered with Lucien's letter in his hand. At the appearance of the warden, Jacques Collin, prostrated beneath the violence of his outburst of grief, appeared to grow calm.

"Here is a letter which the attorney-general bade me to give you still unopened," said M. Gault.

"It is from Lucien?"—said Jacques Collin.

"Yes."

"Is it true, sir, that this young man is—?"

"Is dead," interrupted the warden. "Even if the doctor had been in the prison at the time, he must have come too late.—The young man is dead; there—in one of the pistoles—"

"May I see him with my own eyes?" asked Jacques Collin, timidly. "Will you allow a father to weep over his son's body?"

"You may, if you wish, take his apartment, for

I have orders to transfer you to one of the chambers of the pistole. Your solitary confinement is over."

The prisoner's eyes, from which all the warmth of life had departed, turned slowly from the warden to the doctor; Jacques Collin questioned them, for he feared some trap and hesitated to leave his cell.

"If you wish to see the body," said the doctor, "you have no time to lose; it is to be removed this very night."—

"If you have children, gentlemen," said Jacques Collin, "you will understand my imbecility; I can scarcely see—this blow is more terrible to me than death; but you cannot understand what I say.—If you are fathers at all, you are only fathers in one way;—I am a mother too!—I—I am mad—I know it."

By passing through passages, whose unyielding doors opened before the warden alone, it is possible to go from the cells designed for solitary confinement to the pistoles in a very brief time. These two rows of rooms are separated by a subterranean corridor that runs between two massive walls which uphold the vault upon which rests that gallery of the Palais de Justice, known as the Galerie Marchande. Thus Jacques Collin, accompanied by the turnkey, who held him by the arm, preceded by the warden and followed by the physician, arrived in a few minutes at the cell where Lucien lay stretched upon the bed.

At the sight, Jacques Collin flung himself upon

the body and clasped it with such desperation that the three witnesses of the scene shuddered at the passionate vehemence of the embrace.

"This," said the doctor to the warden," is an example of what I was saying. You will see;—he'll crush the body, and yet you don't know what a corpse is; it is a stone.—"

"Leave me alone,"—said Jacques Collin in a dying voice; "I have not long to see him. They are coming to take him away from me to—"

He stopped before the word *bury.*

"You'll allow me to keep some remembrance of my beloved child!—Will you please cut for me yourself, sir," said he to Dr. Lebrun, "a few locks of his hair, for I cannot—"

"It is his son, indeed!" said the doctor.

"Do you think so?" replied the warden, with an air of deep thought which threw the physician into a short reverie.

The warden ordered the turnkey to leave the prisoner alone in the cell, and to cut a few locks from the son's head and give them to the pretended father before the body was taken away.

At half past five on a May evening it is easy to read a letter in the Conciergerie in spite of the iron bars and the wire meshes of the lattice which darken the windows. Jacques Collin read the terrible letter slowly, without loosing his grasp of Lucien's hand.

We know no man who, for ten minutes, can hold a piece of ice and squeeze it firmly in the hollow of

his hand. Cold glides to the fountain of life with deadly speed. Yet the effect of this intense cold, acting, though it does, like poison, is scarcely comparable to the impression made upon the soul by the stiff chill hand of a corpse held thus in a living grasp. Then death speaks to life and tells black secrets which kill all feeling; for when feeling changes, does it not die?

Upon re-reading Lucien's letter, together with Jacques Collin, these last words will appear what the wretched convict felt them to be, a draught of poison:

"TO THE ABBE CARLOS HERRERA.

"My Dear Abbé:

"From you I have received naught but benefits, and yet I have betrayed you. This involuntary ingratitude kills me, and when you read these lines I shall have ceased to live; you cannot be at my side to save me.

"You have given me full permission to ruin you, and to cast you from me like the butt of a cigar, if by so doing I might secure some advantage for myself; but I have sacrificed you stupidly. In order to extricate himself from danger, deceived by an artful question of the judge, I, your spiritual son,—whom you have adopted, has ranged himself in the ranks of those who wish to murder you at any cost, by establishing a false identity between you and a French scoundrel. This is the whole story.

"Between a man of your power and me, whom

you wished to be more great than I could ever have been, there must be no exchange of idle reproaches at this moment of eternal separation. You desired to make me powerful and glorious; you have hurled me into the abyss of suicide: this is all. It is a long time since I have ceased to hear the whirr of the mighty wings of giddiness swooping down upon me.

"There is the posterity of Cain as well as that of Abel, as you have sometimes said. In the great drama of humanity, Cain is the enemy. You are descended from Adam by that line whose flame the devil has fanned unceasingly since its first spark fell upon Eve. Among the demons of this race there appear, from time to time, terrible beings, whose vast organizations contain the sum of all the powers of man, and who are like those restless beasts of the desert that need the immense solitudes they inhabit. Creatures like these are as dangerous to society as lions turned loose in the heart of Normandy: they need a pasturage; they devour common men and browse upon the money of fools. Their very games are so perilous that at length they kill the meek dog which they have chosen for a companion, for an idol. When God so wills it, these mysterious beings are Moses, Attila, Charlemagne, Mohammed or Napoleon, but when he lets these gigantic instruments rust at the bottom of the ocean of a generation, they are but Pagatcheff, Fouché, Louvel or the Abbé Carlos Herrera. Endued with boundless influence over

sensitive souls, they attract them and grind them to powder. It is great; in its way it is beautiful. It is the venomous plant of gorgeous colors which fascinates children in the woods. It is the poetry of evil. Men, such as you, should dwell in caverns and never come forth. You have made me live this giant life and I have finished my full measure of existence. Thus I may draw my neck from the gordian knots of your projects to slip it into the running noose of my cravat.

"To repair my fault I transmit to the attorney-general a full retraction of my examination.—You will find this document of advantage to you.

"By the wish formally expressed in my testament, you will receive the sums belonging to your order, which you have very imprudently expended in my behalf, on account of the fatherly affection which you have displayed toward me.

"Adieu, then, adieu, mighty statue of Evil and of Corruption. Adieu, you who, in the path of right, might have been more than Ximenès, more than Richelieu! You have kept your promises; once more I find myself such as I was upon the bank of the Charente after having owed to you the enchantments of a dream; but, unhappily, it is no longer the river of my native place wherein I was about to drown all my boyhood's sins; it is the Seine; and my pit is a cell of the Conciergerie.

"Do not regret me; my contempt for you was as great as my admiration.

"LUCIEN."

Before one o'clock in the morning, when the porters came to carry away the body, they found Jacques Collin kneeling before the bed, while the letter lay upon the ground by his side, fallen, no doubt, as the pistol falls from the hand of the suicide; but the unhappy prisoner still held Lucien's hand clasped between his own and prayed.

At the sight of this man, the porters stopped a moment, for he resembled one of those stone figures which the sculptor's genius has made to kneel forever upon the tombs of the Middle Ages. This sham priest, with eyes bright as those of tigers, and body stiffened into unnatural rigidity, made so deep an impression upon the spectators that they asked him with gentleness to get up.

"Why?" he asked timidly.

The dauntless Trompe-la-Mort had become feeble as a child.

The warden pointed this spectacle out to M. de Chargebœuf, who, filled with respect in the presence of great sorrow, and not doubting that Jacques Collin was indeed the true father, explained M. de Granville's orders in regard to the funeral and Lucien's removal; and told the prisoner that it was absolutely necessary to carry Lucien to his former dwelling on the quai Malaquais, where priests were waiting to watch beside the body during the remainder of the night.

"I see in this the magistrate's noble soul," exclaimed the convict in a melancholy voice. "Tell him, sir, that he can count upon my gratitude—yes,

I can render him great services.—Do not forget what I say; it is of the highest importance to him. Ah! sir, a man's heart is strangely altered when he has wept for seven hours over a child like this.—I shall never see him again—!"

Casting one look upon Lucien, the look of a mother from whose side the body of her son is torn, Jacques Collin sank to the floor. As he watched the porters raise Lucien's body, he uttered a groan which made them hasten to finish their duty.

The attorney-general's secretary and the warden had already found an opportunity to withdraw.

What had become of this brazen nature wherein the decision was rapid as the glance and thought and action burst forth like a single stroke of lightning; whose nerves, toughened by three escapes, by three imprisonments, had attained the metallic solidity of the nerves of a savage? At a certain heat iron yields to blows or to continual pressure; its impenetrable molecules, purified by man and rendered homogeneous, disintegrate, and unless it be in a state of fusion, the metal has no longer the same virtue of resistance. Farriers, blacksmiths, cutlers, all who work this metal continually, express its condition at this stage by a technical word. *The iron is retted*, they say, appropriating this expression which belongs exclusively to flax, whose fibers are separated by steeping. Just so, the human soul, or, if you prefer, the triple energy of body, heart and mind, when it has been struck by certain repeated blows, comes into a condition

analogous to that of iron. Men are then like flax and iron, they are retted. Science, justice, and the public seek a thousand causes for the terrible catastrophes upon railroads resulting by the rupture of an iron rail—of this the accident at Bellevue furnishes the most frightful example—but nobody has asked the opinion of the best judges, the smiths, who have all given the same answer, "The iron was retted." This danger cannot be foreseen. The metal which has become soft, and the metal which has remained unyielding, offer the same appearance.

It is in this condition that priests and examining judges often find great criminals. The terrible sensations aroused by the Court of Assizes and by the prison-dress effects, even in the strongest natures, this dislocation of the nervous system. The most violently compressed lips open and let confessions pass; the hardest hearts break; and strangest feature of all, it is at a moment when confession is useless that this last feebleness snatches from the prisoner his mask of innocence, beneath which he has alarmed the law, always uneasy when the condemned man dies without confessing his crime.

Napoleon felt this dissolution of all human strength upon the field of battle at Waterloo!

*

At eight o'clock in the morning, the turnkey of the pistoles entered the room where Jacques Collin was confined, and found him pale and calm like a man strengthened by some violent resolution.

"It is time to go to the yard," said the turnkey; "you have been confined for three days; if you wish to walk and get the air, you may!"

Absorbed in his thoughts, Jacques Collin had ceased to take an interest in his fate; looking upon himself as a garment without a body, as a mere rag, he did not suspect the trap which Bibi Lupin had set for him, nor the importance of his entry into the prison yard. The wretched man left his cell mechanically, and walked down the corridor past the cells built against the cornices that decorated the magnificent arcade of the palace of French kings, upon which rests the so-called gallery of Saint Louis which leads to the various dependencies of the Court of Appeals. This corridor joins that of the pistoles and, as may be interesting to know, the cell once occupied by Louvel, one of the most famous of regicides, is situated in the right angle formed by the elbow of these two corridors. Beneath the attractive office in the Tour Bonbec is a spiral staircase which leads down from this gloomy corridor; and by these stairs the prisoners lodged in the pistoles, or in the cells, make their exits and their entrances to and from the yard.

All the *détenus,* the *accusés,* both those about to appear at the bar of the Court of Assizes, and those who have appeared there, the *prévenus* who are no longer in solitary confinement, in short all the prisoners of the Conciergerie, walk in this narrow paved spot for a few hours every day, and generally during the summer months, in the early morning. This yard, the antechamber, which leads to prison or the scaffold, is linked to society by the gendarme, by the office of the examining magistrate, and by the Court of Assizes. It is more awful to look upon than the scaffold itself. The scaffold may become a ladder ascending to heaven; but the prison yard is a mass of all the earth's vileness heaped up without means of escape!

Whether it be the yard of the Force, or of Poissy, or of Melun, or of Sainte-Pélagie, a prison yard is a prison yard. The same features are reproduced down to their least details, even the color of the walls and the height and width of the enclosure. Besides, the Studies of Manners would belie their title did they not contain an exact description of this Parisian pandemonium.

Beneath the mighty arches which support the audience chamber of the Court of Appeals, there is in the fourth arcade a stone, from which they say Saint Louis was accustomed to distribute his alms, and which to-day serves as a counter where the prisoners may buy certain kinds of food and drink. Thus, the moment that they are admitted to the yard, the prisoners gather hastily

about this stone laden with such luxuries as rum and brandy.

The first two arches on that side of the yard which faces the splendid byzantine gallery, that last vestige of the beauty of Saint Louis' palace, are partitioned off so as to form a parlor where lawyers consult with prisoners. The clients are admitted by a formidable wicket, through which run two paths separated from each other by an enormous grating, and comprised within the limits of the third arch. This double entrance resembles those pathways temporarily constructed at theatre doors to contain the crowd thronging to buy tickets for some popular play. This parlor, situated at one end of the vast hall, opposite the present wicket of the Conciergerie, was formerly lighted by small windows looking out toward the prison yard, and has lately been brightened by glazed frames at the side of the wicket placed so near the ground that it is easy for those without to see the lawyers in conference with their clients. This innovation has been rendered necessary by the too dangerous fascination which pretty women exercised over their defenders. We can never be sure how far morality will go! These precautions resemble those ready-made examinations of conscience wherein the purest imaginations become corrupted by mere thought of immorality, whose realization they do not know. In this parlor, also, take place the interviews of the prisoners with such relatives or friends as they are permitted to see.

The reader must now understand what the prison yard means to the two hundred prisoners of the Conciergerie; it is their garden, a garden without trees, earth or flowers; in a word it is a prison yard. The appurtenances of the parlor and of Saint Louis' stone, over which the authorized eatables and drinkables are dispensed, form the only possible communication with the outside world.

The minutes which the prisoner spends in the yard are his only opportunity to enjoy air or companionship. In other prisons the inmates are allowed to work together, but at the Conciergerie no occupation is permitted to prisoners who are not confined in a pistole. The drama of the Court of Assizes fills every mind, for no person is taken to the Conciergerie who is not to undergo examination or judgment. This court yard is a dreadful spectacle; it cannot be imagined unless a man see it, or has seen it once.

The assemblage of a hundred prisoners in a space forty yards long by thirty in breadth is not composed of the flower of society. These wretches, who for the most part belong to the lowest classes, are ill-clad, their faces are debased or brutal, for a criminal who has come from the higher spheres of the social scale is happily a rare exception. Peculation, forgery, or fraudulent failures, the only crimes which can bring *respectable* people to prison, are all permitted the privilege of the pistole; and the prisoner confined under these conditions scarcely ever leaves his cell.

This promenade framed in by fine, yet blackened and forbidding walls, by a colonnade divided into cells, by a fortified façade that faces the quay, by the grated chambers of the pistole, toward the north, guarded by watchful turnkeys, crammed with a herd of degraded criminals, each suspicious of his neighbor, is at first but a sad sight for the casual spectator; but soon he grows alarmed when he sees himself the centre of glances pregnant with hate, curiosity and despair which these dishonored creatures cast upon him. Joy is banished; places and men are imbued with the same melancholy. Walls and consciences are silent alike. For these wretches, danger is omnipresent; they dare not trust in one another or rely upon a friendship, sinister as its birthplace—the galleys. The turnkeys, hovering about, poison the atmosphere and corrupt everything, even the handshake of two friends in misery. A criminal who meets his best friend there cannot be sure whether the latter has not repented of their intimacy and confessed in the selfish interest of his own fate. This absence of security, this fear of *sheep*, annihilates the deceitful liberty of the prison yard. In prison slang the *sheep* is a detective, apparently overwhelmed by the weight of some crime, whose proverbial cleverness consists in playing the part of a *friend.* The word *friend* signifies in slang a crafty and consummate thief, who wishes to remain a thief all his life, and abides faithfully by the laws of the *swell-mob.*

Crime bears some resemblance to madness. The

prisoners in the yard of the Conciergerie are but a repetition of the madmen in the garden of an asylum. Both these classes of men walk up and down avoiding their comrades and casting from side to side strange or angry looks, according to the feelings of the moment. They are never happy, never quite serious; for they either know or fear one another. Suspense, remorse and anxiety give to those who walk about this yard the haggard uneasy look of madness. Life-long criminals alone acquire an assurance which resembles the tranquillity of an honest life and the sincerity of a pure conscience.

The presence of men of the middle class is exceptional, for shame holds within their cells the few whom crime has sent thither; and so the prisoners in the yard are generally dressed like persons of the working class. The smock-frock, the blouse and the velveteen waistcoat predominate. These coarse and dirty costumes, in harmony with low and vicious faces with manners still brutal although somewhat subdued by melancholy thoughts, contribute to the terror and disgust of the rare visitor for whom some influential person has secured the distinguished privilege of studying the Conciergerie.

In the same way that an anatomical museum, wherein the vilest diseases are portrayed in wax, awakens determination for a better life in the breast of a young man, the sight of the Conciergerie and the aspect of the prison yard, crowded with its denizens sentenced to imprisonment, the scaffold or some other disgraceful penalty, inspires with the fear of

human retribution men long deaf to the voice of divine justice, loud as its voice may sound within their consciences; and so they go their ways, honest people for a long time to come.

Since the prisoners, who were walking about the yard when Jacques Collin entered it, were destined to be actors in one of the great scenes of the life of Trompe-la-Mort, it is not unnecessary to describe a few of the principal figures in this terrible assemblage.

There, as in all places where men meet together; there, as at college, physical and moral strength are the ruling powers; and there, as in the convict prisons, aristocracy is built upon a scale of crime. He, whose head is in danger, overtops all his companions. The yard, as we believe, is a school of criminal law; it is taught there far better than in the Place du Panthéon. A periodic amusement consists in repeating the drama of the Court of Assizes, of appointing a president, a jury, a public prosecutor and a lawyer for the defence, and of conducting a trial in due form. This horrible farce takes place almost always upon the occasion of the committal of some famous crime. At the time of which we speak there was an important criminal trial in process at the Court of Assizes: a brutal murder committed upon the persons of M. Crottat, an old farmer, and his wife, the father and mother of the notary of that name. As evidence in this painful case proved, the aged couple were in possession of eight hundred thousand francs in gold. One of the

authors of this double murder was the notorious Dannepont, alias La Pouraille, an escaped convict, who for five years had eluded the most diligent researches of the police, thanks to the protection of seven or eight different names. The disguises of this rascal were so perfect that he had served two years' imprisonment under the name of Delsouq, one of his own pupils, a famous thief, who in his trade never outstepped the limits of the police court jurisdiction. La Pouraille had committed three murders since his escape from the galleys. The certainty of a death sentence rendered this murderer an object of terror and admiration to his fellow prisoners; and their respect was still further increased by his reputed wealth, for not a penny of the stolen hoard had been recovered. In spite of the events of July, 1830, many readers can still recall the horror that Paris felt at this bold crime, which in importance may be compared with the robbery of the medals from the Library; for the unhappy tendency of our time to value everything by its price, renders a murder striking in proportion to the amount of money for the sake of which it is committed.

La Pouraille, a small, thin, spare man, with features like a weasel's, was, at the age of forty-five, one of the most notorious criminals of three prisons, the first of which he had entered at the age of nineteen. At one time, as the reader will soon perceive, he had been an intimate acquaintance of Jacques Collin. Transferred from the Force to the

Conciergerie during the last twenty-four hours, in company with La Pouraille, were two other convicts who had recognized their comrade on the spot and had spread throughout the prison yard, the sinister celebrity of this *friend* doomed to the scaffold. One of the prisoners, himself a discharged convict, named Sélérier, and surnamed variously l'Auvergnat, Father Ralleau and le Rouleur, who, in the society which convict-slang terms the *swell mob*, went by the cognomen of Fil-de-Soie, a title due to the address with which he threaded his way through the dangers of his trade, was a former accomplice of Trompe-la-Mort.

Trompe-la-Mort suspected Fil-de-Soie so strongly of playing a double game, of being in the pay of the police while he retained his place at the council board of the *swell mob*, that he had attributed to him —see Père Goriot—his arrest in the Maison Vauquer in 1819. Sélérier, whom we shall call Fil-de-soie in like manner as Dannepont will be known as La Pouraille, already charged with escape from prison, was implicated in considerable robberies, which, although no blood had been spilled, were sufficient to condemn him to a term of at least twenty years. The other convict, named Riganson, and his mistress, who was surnamed la Biffe, formed one of the most redoubtable couples of the *swell mob*. Riganson, who from youth up had been at variance with the law, went by the nickname of le Biffon. Le Biffon was the masculine of la Biffe, for in the *swell mob* nothing is held sacred.

These savages respect neither law nor religion; not even natural history whose sacred nomenclature is, as we have seen, parodied by them.

A digression is necessary at this point; for Jacques Collin's entrance into the prison yard and his sudden appearance in the midst of his enemies, so cleverly contrived by Bibi Lupin and the examining judge, as well as the curious scenes which are to follow, would be inadmissible and incomprehensible without some words of explanation upon the world of thieves and convicts, upon their laws, their customs, and above all upon their language, whose hideous poetry is indispensable to this chapter of the story. First of all, let us describe the language of blacklegs, and of cheats, of robbers, and of murderers, called *slang*, which in these latter days has been borrowed by literature with such success that more than one word of this strange vocabulary has passed through the rosy lips of young women, echoed beneath gilded panels, and delighted princes, of whom more than one has found an opportunity to declare himself *done brown.* Let us affirm, though many people, perhaps, will be astonished at such a declaration, that there is no language more forcible and none more picturesque than that of this subterranean world; a language which, so long as great cities have existed, has been spoken in cellars, in sewers, and in the *third basements* of society, if we may borrow a vivid and descriptive expression from dramatic art. Is not the world a stage? The third basement is the

lowest cellar situated beneath the boards of the opera, wherein are stored scenes, and scene-shifters, foot-lights, apparitions and all the blue devils which rise from the mouth of hell.

Every word in this language is a brutal, ingenious or terrible metaphor. Trousers are *sit upons*, there is no need of explaining this. In slang a man does not sleep, he does the *balmy*. Note the force with which this word expresses the sleep peculiar to the hunted, weary, defiant beast whom society calls robber, and who, the instant that he reaches a place of safety, falls in his tracks and sinks into profound and necessary slumber, while the strong wings of suspicion still hover over him. Fearful repose, like that of some wild creature which sleeps and snores while their ears double the prudent keenness of their watch!

Everything about this idiom is grim. The syllables which begin and end the words are dissonant and strange. A woman is a *moll*. There is poetry, too; straw becomes *cast-away feathers*. The word "midnight" is rendered by the periphrasis: *It clangs a dozen*. Is not that a sound to shudder at? To *scoop a closet* means to rifle a bedroom. What force has the expression, "go to bed," compared with *to slough*, to cast off an old skin? What imagination is there in their imagery! To *play dominoes*, means to eat; how do hunted men eat?

Slang never stands still; it follows close upon the heels of civilization. At each new invention it enriches itself with new expressions. The potato,

created and brought to light by Louis XVI. and Parmentier, is instantly greeted by a new title, *pig-oranges.* Banknotes are invented; the convict terms them *Garat's shivers,* after the name of Garat, the cashier, by whom they are signed. *Shiver!* cannot you hear the rustle of the crisp papers? The thousand-franc note is a *male shiver;* the note of five hundred francs is a *female shiver.* You may be sure that convicts will soon baptize one-hundred and two-hundred franc notes by some fanciful name.

In 1790, for humanity's interest, Guillotin invents the expeditious machine which solves all problems raised by the institution of the death penalty. Immediately, convicts and discharged galley-slaves examine this mechanism placed on the monarchical confines of the old system and upon the frontiers of modern law. All at once they call it the *Abbey of the Sorrowful Mount!* They study the angle described by the steel blade, and to paint its action they coin the word *mow!* When we remember that the prison is called the *meadow,* those of us who are interested in the study of language must admire the creation of these horrible *vocables,* as Charles Nodier would have called them.

Let us not forget the great antiquity of slang. A tenth of the words are descended from the Roman tongue, another tenth are derived from the old Gallic language of Rabelais. *Effondrer,* "to crack," means to force open; *otolondrer,* "to spur," is to bore; *cambrioler,* "to live licentiously;" *aubert,*

"wad," money; *gironde,* "beautiful," the name of a river in the Langue d'Oc; *fouillousse,* "cly," pocket. All these belong to the language of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Affe,* for life, is of the highest antiquity. From the expression, *Troubler l'affe* is derived *affres*, a popular word that means "blowing up;" whence, in its turn, springs the word *affreux,* the interpretation of which is "that which troubles life."

At least a hundred slang words belong to the language of Panurge, who, in the Rabelasian works, typifies the people; for this name is composed of two Greek words which mean, "he who does all." Science changes the face of civilization with the steam engine; slang has already christened it *le Roulant Vif,* "The Rattler."

The name of the head, while it is still on the shoulders, *la sorbonne,* indicates the remote source of this tongue in the works of the most ancient romancers, Cervantes, the Italian story-tellers and Arentino. From time immemorial *la fille,* the prostitute, the heroine of so many romances, has been the protectress, comrade, and the consolation of cheat, robber, thief, knave, and blackleg alike.

Prostitution and theft are two living protests, male and female, of the *natural state* against the laws of society. Thus philosophers, innovators, humanitarians, with communists and the followers of Fourier in their train, unconsciously arrive at these two conclusions, prostitution and theft. The thief does not write sophistical books to argue

concerning ownership and inheritance, the guarantees of social order: he simply ignores them. For him to steal is but to regain his own. He does not discuss marriage; he does not attack it; he does not, in printed Utopias, demand this mutual consent, this narrow alliance of souls that cannot become universal. He chooses his mate violently, and the chain which binds him to her is riveted more and more tightly by the hammer of necessity. Modern innovators write windy, gossamer, nebulous theories or philosophical romances; but the thief acts; he is lucid as fact, logical as a blow from the shoulder. And what a style he has acquired!—

One other observation. The world of harlots, of thieves, and of murderers, the galleys and the prisons contain a population of from sixty to eighty thousand individuals, male and female. This multitude must not be neglected in the description of our manners, and in the literal reproduction of our social state. Justice, the gendarmes, and the police furnish another army whose numbers almost equal its adversary. This is a strange fact. This battle between hunters and hunted is an immense duel, eminently dramatic, sketched in this study. Thievery and the trade of the harlot are like the stage, the police, the priesthood, and the system of gendarmerie. Under these six conditions the individual assumes an indelible character. He no longer has the power to become other than he is. The stigmata of holy priesthood are quite as ineradicable as those of the soldier. The same truth holds good of other

careers which are natural enemies, *contraries* in civilization. These violent diagnostics, strange, peculiar and *sui generis* as they are, render the harlot and the thief, the murderer and the discharged convict, as easy for their enemies, the detective and the gendarme, to recognize, as game is for the hunter: they have their own inalienable mien, bearing, complexion, look, color, odor, in short, their own unmistakable *peculiarities.* Hence comes that perfect knowledge of disguise which is the accomplishment of every famous convict.

One word more upon the constitution of this society, which the abolition of the brand, the mitigation of punishments, and the stupid leniency of the jury render very dangerous. Certainly within twenty years Paris will be surrounded by an army of forty thousand discharged convicts, since the Department of the Seine, with its fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants, is the only spot in all France where these unhappy wretches can hope to disappear. For them Paris is what the virgin forest is for wild beasts.

The *swell mob,* which in this society takes the place of the aristocracy of the Faubourg Saint Germain, was, in the year 1816, after the conclusion of a peace which endangered so many lives, organized into an association called the *good pals,* in which were numbered the most celebrated chiefs of the numerous gangs of burglars, and several bold adventurers, who were entirely without other means of livelihood. This word *pals* implied at

once brothers, friends and comrades. All robbers, convicts and prisoners are *pals.* But the *good pals,* worthy offspring of the *swell mob,* has been for twenty years and more the Court of Appeals, the Institute, the Chamber, and the peerage of this people. The *good pals* all possessed their own private means, while they owned certain funds in common and separate dwelling places. Every man knew his mates and owed them aid and comfort in adversity. Wholly superior to the ruse and seductive offers of the police, they possessed their own constitution, their own pass words and signs.

These dukes and peers of the galleys had formed, between the years 1815 and 1819, the famous society of the *Ten Thousand,*—see Père Goriot—thus named from the constitution, by virtue of which no member might undertake a job which promised to yield less than *ten thousand* francs. Even at the present time, in 1829 and 1830, memoranda are published wherein the numbers of this society and the very names of its members are recorded by one of the celebrities of the detective police. The reader learned with dismay of the existence of a great army of men and women—an army so formidable, so adroit, and often so lucky, that Pastourel, Collonge and Chimaux, burglars of from fifty to sixty years of age, are mentioned as having been in revolt against society from their cradles!—What greater proof of the impotence of law is there than the mere existence of robbers grown old in crime.

Jacques Collin was treasurer not only of the society of the *Ten Thousand*, but also of the *good pals*, the heroes of the galleys. By the testimony of competent authorities, the galleys are never without their treasuries. It is not difficult to understand the reason of this peculiarity, for unless the case be exceptional, stolen money is never recovered. Criminals condemned to the galleys are unable to take their gains with them, and so are compelled to have recourse to any secret and reliable agency at their command, and to deposit their wealth, just as in society people deposit their money in some bank.

Originally, Bibi Lupin, for ten years chief of the secret service, had been a member of the aristocracy of the *good pals*. His treason was the result of wounded pride; he had seen his reputation eclipsed at every step by the keen intelligence and prodigious strength of Trompe-la-Mort. From this origin came the vindictive hate which the well-known chief of the secret service cherished for Jacques Collin; hence likewise, arose certain mutual agreements between Bibi Lupin and his former comrade, which now began to engross the attention of the magistrates.

Thus, in his keen desire for vengeance, to which the examining judge had given full rein, owing to the necessity of establishing Jacques Collin's identity, the chief of the secret service had chosen his allies with great shrewdness when he loosed upon the Spaniard's trail la Pouraille, Fil-de-Soie, and

le Biffon; for la Pouraille belonged to the *Ten Thousand*, while Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon were both members of the *good pals*.

La Biffe, Biffon's redoubtable mistress, who, thanks to her numerous and fashionable disguises, still eludes the vigilance of the police, was at large at this time. This woman, the admirable mimic of marchioness, baroness and countess alike, owns a carriage and servants. This feminine Jacques Collin is the only woman who can be compared with Jacques Collin's right arm, Asia. Every hero of the galleys, in fact, has a double in the guise of a devoted woman. The annals of crime, the secret chronicles of the Palais de Justice will tell you this truth. No passionate love of an honest woman, not even the adoration of a nun for her confessor, can surpass the attachment of the mistress, who shares the perils of some great criminal.

In this sphere of society, passion is almost invariably the primitive reason for boundless audacity and recklessness of murder. The excessive love which drags them, *constitutionally*, as doctors say, toward women, consumes all the moral and physical strength of these giants of energy. Hence comes the idleness which consumes their days; for this violent love will admit of no rival occupation. This infatuation accounts for their dislike to every species of labor; a repugnance which compels these wretches to resort to the most rapid methods of procuring money. Nevertheless, the necessity of living, and of living in comfort, strong as it is, is but

trifling in comparison with the prodigality inspired by the woman upon whom these generous Médors heap gowns and jewels, which are received with an insatiate desire for more. The woman desires a shawl, the lover steals it, and the woman sees therein a new proof of love! Thus it is that men come to steal, and if the human heart be examined beneath a microscope, this sentiment will appear almost natural. Theft leads to murder, and step by step murder leads the lover to the scaffold.

The uncurbed physical love of these men seems to be, if we may believe the Medical Faculty, the origin of seven-tenths of the crimes which they commit. A palpable and striking proof of this appears at the autopsy of a man who has been executed. Then is made plain the adoration that the mistress feels for her unnatural lover, the bugbear of society. It is the feminine devotion that lies crouched at the prison door always watchful to foil the crafty thrusts of the examining judge; the incorruptible guardians of the blackest secrets, who render hidden mysteries impenetrable. In this wild union lie at once the prisoner's weakness and his strength. In the language of prostitutes, *to be honest* means simply and solely never to fail in any law of this attachment; it means to give the last penny to the *jugged*—imprisoned—man; to hold sacred every promise given to him, and to stop at nothing if it be for his sake. The most cruel reproach that one of these women can cast in another's teeth is to accuse her of infidelity toward a *smugged*—apprehended—

lover. A woman who has fallen to this depth is looked upon as wholly without heart.

La Pouraille was passionately fond of a woman, as we shall have occasion to see. Fil-de-Soie, an egotistical philosopher, who robbed for his pocket's sake, bore a strong resemblance to Jacques Collin's devoted slave, Paccard, who had fled with Prudence Servien, and seven hundred and fifty thousand francs in the bargain. He had no attachments, he despised women, and cared for Fil-de-Soie alone; on the other hand Biffon, as the reader knows, owed his nickname to his attachment for la Biffe. All these three examples of the *swell mob* were determined to call Jacques Collin to accounts that would be difficult, indeed, to settle.

The treasurer alone knew the number of depositors who still survived, and the fortune of each one. The mortality, peculiar to his associates, had entered into his calculations at the time when Trompe-la-Mort had resolved to make away with this money for the sake of the advantages that would accrue to Lucien. Since he had successfully avoided the researches of his comrades and of the police for nine years, Jacques Collin felt confident of inheriting, in accordance with the terms of the constitution of the *good pals*, the property of at least two-thirds of his depositors. Could he not, besides, allege payments made to *mown*—guillotined—*pals?* In a word, this chief of *good pals* was bound by no restraint. His fellow convicts had no choice other than to rely upon his probity, for the hunted lives

that these creatures lead entailed the utmost delicacy among the aristocratic class of this savage society. Jacques Collin had stolen three hundred thousand francs, he might, perhaps, free himself from all obligations by the payment of a hundred thousand. At this time, as the reader knows, la Pouraille, one of Jacques Collin's creditors, had but ninety days to live. Furnished with funds, far more considerable, doubtless, than those which he had entrusted to his chief, la Pouraille was not likely to create much disturbance.

One of the infallible tests by which prison wardens and their turnkeys, the police and its agents, and even the examining magistrates recognize *old horses*—that is to say those who have already eaten the fare of beans which the state deals out to its prisoners—is their evident familiarity with their surroundings. Returned convicts are naturally no strangers to the customs of prison life; they are at home, and show astonishment at nothing.

*

By keeping a ceaseless watch over his own actions, Jacques Collin had thus far played to perfection the part of an innocent man, entirely unacquainted with both the Force and the Conciergerie. But, crushed beneath the weight of grief and of a double death, for on this fatal night he had twice passed through death's agony, he was transformed once again into Jacques Collin. The turnkey was amazed when he found that the Spanish priest needed no guidance to find his way to the prison yard. Consummate actor as he was, Collin forgot his part; he descended the spiral staircase of the Tour Bonbec with the careless precipitation of an old inmate of the Conciergerie.

"Bibi Lupin is right," muttered the turnkey to himself; "he's an *old horse,* he's Jacques Collin."

At the moment when Trompe la-Mort appeared in the frame which the doorway of the Tower formed about his figure, the prisoners, who had completed their purchases at the stone table of Saint Louis, were dispersing themselves about the yard, always too narrow for their wants. Thus everybody perceived the new comer at the same instant, and with all the more rapidity as nothing can be more perfect than the vision which these prisoners acquire cooped up in a yard like spiders in their webs. This comparison is mathematically exact, for since

his view is hemmed in on every side by high and black walls, the prisoner, even without turning his eyes, can see the door by which the turnkeys enter, the windows of the parlor, of the staircase and of the Tour Bonbec, the sole means of exit from the yard. In his profound isolation, everything seems to him to involve some chance of accident, every detail absorbs his attention. The very weariness of his mind, like that of the caged tiger in the Jardin des Plantes, multiplies his powers of attention. It is interesting to observe that Jacques Collin, dressed like an ecclesiastic who does not confine himself to a strict observance of his cloth, wore a pair of black trousers, black socks, shoes ornamented by silver buckles, a black waistcoat, and a coat of dark maroon color, the cut of which betrayed the priest in spite of the situation of its master, above all since its testimony was corroborated by the characteristic method of wearing the hair. Jacques Collin wore a wig superlatively ecclesiastic and marvelously true to life.

"Look, look," said la Pouraille to Biffon; "That's a bad sign. A *boar*—priest!—What brings him here?"

"It's one of their dodges, a new kind of *cook*—detective—. It's some *trapper*—the old-fashioned mounted gendarme—in disguise, who has come on business."

The gendarme has different names in slang: when he is in pursuit of a thief he is a *trapper;* when he is escorting him to prison he becomes a

butcher bird, and, finally, as he conducts the sufferer to the scaffold, he is called the *knight of the guillotine.*

To make the picture of the prison yard complete, it is necessary to describe in a few words the appearance of the two other *pals.* Sélérier, alias l'Auvergnat, Father Ralleau, le Rouleur, in short, Fil-de-Soie—he had thirty names and as many passports—will henceforward be designated by this title; the only one recognized among the *good pals.* This profound philosopher, who discerned a gendarme beneath the guise of the false priest, was a fellow of some five feet four inches, with muscles that protruded from his body in lumps. Set deep in his head, his small eyes gleamed brightly, although they were overhung by lids gray, heavy and leaden as those of a bird of prey. At first sight, his thick-set, prominent jaw gave him the appearance of a wolf, but the cruelty and the ferocity which this resemblance entailed was counterbalanced by the sly and vivacious play of his features, furrowed, though they were, with the ravages of small-pox. The clear-cut lines of his face seemed to denote wit, and it was easy to read mockery in his expression. The life of criminals, chequered with hunger, thirst, nights passed in bivouac on wharves and river-banks, on bridges and in streets, by orgies where the triumph of crime was celebrated with strong drink, had washed this face, as it were, with a coat of varnish. Had an agent of police or a gendarme caught sight of Fil-de-Soie in his accustomed dress,

at thirty paces he would have recognized his game; but in the art of painting his face and of disguising his figure this master rivaled Jacques Collin himself. At this moment Fil-de-Soie, carelessly dressed, like great actors who give no heed to their attire when they are off the stage, wore a kind of hunting waistcoat, lacking several buttons, with torn button holes that disclosed glimpses of white lining, old green slippers, nankeen pantaloons, grown threadbare with age, and upon his head a cap without a visor, from beneath which fell the corners of an old bandanna handkerchief riddled with holes and very much faded.

Beside Fil-de-Soie, le Biffon made a complete contrast. This famous burglar, short of stature, square, stout, agile, with a livid complexion and deep-set black eyes, dressed like a cook, and planted firmly upon two very bowed legs, frightened the observer by a physiognomy wherein predominated all the symptoms of the organization peculiar to carnivorous animals.

Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon were both paying their court to la Pouraille, who had now lost all hope. This man, in whom murder had become a habit, knew that before four months came to an end he would be tried, condemned and executed. Thus Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon, *friends* of la Pouraille, invariably spoke of him as the *Chaplain,* that is to say, the Chaplain of the *Monastery of the Sorrowful Mount*—the slang name for the guillotine.—It is not difficult for the reader to guess the reason for the

obsequious attention which Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon paid to la Pouraille. La Pouraille had buried two hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold, his share of the plunder stolen—as the form of indictment ran—from the dwelling of M. and Madame Crottat. What a magnificent inheritance to bequeath to a pair of *pals*, even though these two hardened criminals were themselves doomed to return to the galleys within a few days. Le Biffon and Fil-de-Soie were to be condemned for complex theft—that is to say, thefts entailing certain aggravating circumstances—to fifteen years imprisonment, to which must be added ten years of a previous sentence which they had taken the liberty of interrupting. Thus, although one of them had twenty-two, and the other twenty-six years of hard labor to undergo, yet neither was without hope of making his escape and unearthing la Pouraille's treasure. The *Ten Thousand*, however, kept his secret to himself; for it appeared to him quite useless to surrender it when he was not so much as condemned. A member of the proudest aristocracy of the galleys, he had revealed nothing concerning his accomplices. His character was well known; M. Popinot, the examiner of this dreadful mystery, could not draw a syllable from his lips.

This terrible triumvirate stood at the upper end of the yard, or, to speak more plainly, immediately below the pistoles. Fil-de-Soie was giving his last words of advice to a young man on trial for his first offence, who, sure of being sentenced to ten years

at hard labor, was gathering information concerning the different *fields*—prisons—.

"Well, my boy," Fil-de-Soie was saying sententiously at the moment Jacques Collin appeared; "the difference between Brest, Toulon and Rochefort lies in this—"

"We shall see, old fellow," said the young man, with the curiosity of a novice.

This prisoner, a young man of respectable family, arrested on the charge of forgery, had come from a pistole adjoining that in which Lucien had been confined.

"You see, my boy; at Brest you're sure of finding beans in the bucket by the third time you dip in your spoon; at Toulon you'll not find 'em till your fifth try, and at Rochefort, you won't get any at all if you're not an *old hand.*"

When he had delivered himself thus, the profound philosopher rejoined la Pouraille and le Biffon, who, absorbed in the contemplation of the *boar*, began to stroll down the yard, while Jacques Collin, overpowered by the weight of his sorrow, moved toward them from the opposite direction. Trompe-la-Mort, at the mercy of his terrible thoughts, the thoughts of a discrowned emperor, did not notice that he was the centre of all looks, the object of all interest; he walked slowly, with his eyes fixed upon the fatal window from whose sash Lucien de Rubempré had hung himself. Not one of the prisoners knew of this event, for Lucien's neighbor, the young forger, through motives which

will soon be disclosed to the reader, had kept the tragedy a close secret. The three *pals* disposed themselves in such a way as to bar the priest's progress.

"He's not a *boar,*" whispered la Pouraille to Fil-de-Soie; "he's an *old horse.* See how he drags his right!"

It is necessary to explain here, for the curiosity of all readers has not led them to inspect the prisons of France, that every convict is fastened to another—an old criminal to a young one—by a chain. The weight of this chain, riveted to a ring immediately above the ankle, is so great that at the end of a year it creates a permanent defect in the convict's gait. Obliged to use more strength in one leg than in the other, in order to drag his *manacle*, that is the name the prisoners give this iron ring, the prisoner contracts the inalienable habit of this effort. Later, when he has ceased to carry his chain, the same phenomenon occurs which happens in the case of amputated limbs: the convict feels the ring riveted forever about his leg; he never can rid himself of the lameness he has thus acquired. To use the technical slang of the police, he *drags his right.* This diagnostic, as widely known among convicts as it is among the agents of police, completes the identification of a comrade, if it does not aid in his immediate recognition.

In Trompe-la-Mort, whose escape had occurred eight years before, this halt had grown almost

imperceptible; but through the absorbing effect of his meditation, his pace was now so slow and solemn that, slight as was the defect in his gait, it could not escape the practiced eye of la Pouraille. It is easy to imagine that convicts, who, at the galleys, are never out of one another's presence, and who have only one another to observe, have studied the physiognomies of their fellow-prisoners with such exactness that they have to come to observe certain habits which escape the scrutiny of their systematic enemies: detectives, gendarmes and the commissioners of police. Thus it was owing to a certain twitching of the maxillary muscles of the left cheek, discerned by a convict who had been sent to a review of the Legion of the Seine, that the lieutenant-colonel of the corps, the celebrated Coignard, owed his arrest; for, in spite of Bibi Lupin's testimony, the police dared not believe in the identity of the Count Pontis de Sainte Hélène with Coignard.

"He's our *boss*—master!"—said Fil-de-Soie, as he felt Jacques Collin's eyes rest upon him in that vacant stare which a man casts upon everything about him when he has sunk into the last stage of despair.

"I'll swear to him. It's Trompe-la-Mort!" said Biffon, rubbing his hands. "Yes! That's his figure and the cut of his shoulders; but what has he done? He doesn't look like himself."

"Oh! I have it!" said Fil-de-Soie. "He's got some scheme; he's trying to see his *aunt*—friend—, who is to be executed shortly."

To give the reader a vague idea of the person whom the turnkeys, the keepers and the wardens call the *aunt,* it is sufficient to relate the splendid answer which the director of one of the central prisons gave the late Lord Durham, who visited all the prisons while in Paris. This nobleman was so anxious to know all the details of French justice, that he induced the late Sanson, the high executioner, to erect a guillotine and execute a living calf that he could see exactly how the machine worked, which the French Revolution had made celebrated.

After the director had shown him the whole prison, the yards, the workshops, the cells, etc., he pointed with a gesture of disgust to a room and said: "I shall not take your excellency to that place, it is the *aunts'* quarter."

—"Hey?" said Lord Durham, "and what is that?"—

"It is the third sex, my lord."

"They're going to *pit*—guillotine—Théodore!" said la Pouraille, "and a pretty boy he is! Clever with his fingers, and with brass to boot; what a loss for the society!"

"Yes, Théodore Calvi is *bolting* his last mouthful," said le Biffon. "Ah! his *molls* will be a *blinking their eyes,* for they were fond of him, poor little beggar!"

"So it's you, is it, old boy?" said la Pouraille, addressing Jacques Collin, as he blocked the new comer's path, with one of his acolytes on either arm.

"So, *boss*, you've turned *boar?*" added la Pouraille.

"They tell me that you've *scooped our tin*—picked our pockets of gold,—" chimed in le Biffon with a menacing air.

"You're going to *cough up the wad*—give us back our money?—" demanded Fil-de-Soie.

These three questions were snapped like as many pistol shots.

"Don't trifle with a poor priest who is here by mistake," answered Jacques Collin, mechanically; for he had recognized his three comrades on the instant.

"That's the ring of his voice; but it's not his *phiz,*" said la Pouraille, laying his hand on Jacques Collin's shoulder.

This gesture and the sudden appearance of his three comrades startled the *boss* violently from his mental prostration, and restored him to the recognition of the realities about him; for during that fatal night he had wandered through the spiritual and infinite regions of the imagination, seeking after some new path.

"*Don't cook your boss's hash*—do not awaken suspicions concerning your master,"—said Jacques Collin in a low tone, while his voice sounded hollow and threatening as the deep growl of a lion. "The *peelers*—the police—are there, let 'em *gulp the bait* —fall into the trap.—I am playing the *game* for a *pal* at the *top notch*—a comrade in the last extremity."—

This was said with all the unction of a priest converting sinners to repentance, and it was accompanied by a look with which Jacques Collin embraced the entire yard, saw the turnkeys grouped beneath the arcades, and pointed them out mockingly to his three companions.

"Aren't there *cooks* here? *Tip up your winkers and use your wipes*—look and see.—Don't *queer* me; but *out with your sneakers,* and *handle me like a boar*—act like complete strangers; take every precaution, and treat me like a priest;—or I'll *swamp* you, and your *molls and your wad* in the bargain—I will ruin you with your women and your fortunes—."

"So you're *sniffing* about us that way—you distrust us—," said Fil-de-Soie. "You've come to *pull out your aunt*—to save your friend—."

"Madeleine is *all tricked out to mount the stump*—ready to ascend the scaffold—," said la Pouraille.

"Théodore!" said Jacques Collin, restraining a scream and a start.

This was the final pang which torture held in store for this fallen colossus.

"They are going to *mow* him," repeated la Pouraille.

"He was *billed through to the devil* two months ago—condemned to death—."

An overpowering weakness came over Jacques Collin. His knees would have bent beneath him had he not been supported by his three companions. In this extremity he had the presence of mind to fold his hands together with a remorseful air. La

Pouraille and le Biffon respectfully supported the sacrilegious Trompe-la-Mort, while Fil-de-Soie ran toward the turnkey on duty before the door of the wicket which leads to the parlor.

"This venerable priest wants to sit down, bring him a chair."

Thus the stratagem contrived by Bibi Lupin failed, Trompe-la-Mort had won the respectful obedience of three convicts, like Napoleon when he was recognized by his soldiers. Two words had been enough. These two words were *your molls and your wad*,—your women and your money;—the epitome of all man's genuine affection. To the three convicts this menace was the stamp of sovereign power; the *boss* still held their fortunes in his hand. Still outwardly all-powerful, their *boss* had not betrayed them as false brothers had insinuated. Their chief's unbounded reputation for skill and cunning stimulated the curiosity of the three convicts; for in prison, curiosity becomes the sole spur of these lost souls.

The hardihood of Jacques Collin's disguise preserved even within the bolted doors of the Conciergerie, won still further admiration of his three brother criminals.

"I've been in solitary confinement for four days, and I didn't know that Théodore was so near the *monastery*,"—said Jacques Collin. "I had come to save a poor boy who hung himself there yesterday, at four o'clock; and now I am on the threshold of a new misfortune. My last ace is played."—

"Poor *boss!*" said Fil-de-Soie.

"Ah! the *baker*—the devil—gives me up!" cried Jacques Collin, breaking away from the grasp of his two companions, and drawing himself up fiercely. "There is a time when the world is too strong for us. The *stork*—the Palais de Justice—swallows us in the end."

The warden of the Conciergerie, apprised of the priest's sudden ailment, came himself to the yard to see what was the matter. He made him sit down upon a chair in the sun and scrutinized him with the extraordinary acuteness which increases from day to day in the exercise of duties such as his, although it is hidden beneath an exterior of apparent indifference.

"Ah! great heaven" exclaimed Jacques Collin. "To be cast among these people, the refuse of society, thieves and assassins all of them!—But God will not forsake his servant. My dear sir, I will leave the stamp of my passage through this place by acts of charity, the remembrance of which shall last. I will lead these unhappy creatures into the fold; they shall learn that they have souls, that life immortal awaits them, and that, if they have lost all they have upon earth, yet paradise may still be won, the paradise which can belong to them at the price of true, sincere repentance."

Twenty or thirty prisoners had run forward and grouped themselves a yard behind the three terrible convicts, and, deterred from approaching nearer by the sullen looks of the *pals*, the inquisitive throng

stood still and listened to this harangue pronounced with priestly unction.

"That man, Monsieur Gault," said the formidable la Pouraille. "We were listening to him."—

"They tell me," continued Jacques Collin, near whom M. Gault was standing, "that there is in this prison a man condemned to death."

"At this moment they are reading him the rejection of his petition," said M. Gault.

"I don't know what that means?" said Jacques Collin ingenuously, looking about him.

"Lord! He's simple," said the small young man who had recently been consulting Fil-de-Soie concerning the best *field beans*.

"Well, to-day or to-morrow they *mow* him!" said a prisoner.

"Mow?" inquired Jacques Collin, whose innocent air of perplexity struck his three comrades with admiration.

"In their language," replied the warden, "that means the execution of the death penalty. If the clerk is reading the rejection, doubtless the executioner is about to receive orders for the execution. The unhappy man has persistently refused the consolation of religion."—

"Ah, sir! it is a soul to save!"—cried Jacques Collin.

The sacrilegious impostor clasped his hands with the gesture of a despairing lover, which the attentive warden took for the effect of holy fervor.

"Ah, sir!" continued Trompe-la-Mort, "suffer me

to prove to you who I am and what I can do, by allowing me to plant the seed of repentance in this hardened heart. God has given me the power of saying words which sometimes work great changes. I break hearts, I open them—what have you to fear. Let me be accompanied by gendarmes, guards, by whomsoever you will."

"I will see whether the prison chaplain is willing that you should replace him," said M. Gault.

The warden turned away, struck with the perfectly indifferent, although curious air, with which the prisoners surveyed the priest, whose evangelical voice spread a charm over his half-French, half-Spanish jargon.

"How is it that you are here, father?" asked Fil-de-Soie's young interlocutor of Jacques Collin.

"Oh! by a mistake," replied Jacques Collin, looking into the inquirer's face. "I was found in the house of a courtesan, who had been robbed after her death. It is proved that she committed suicide; and the perpetrators of the robbery, who are probably the servants, have not as yet been arrested."

"And it is on account of this robbery that this young man hanged himself?"—

"Doubtless the poor child could not bear the thought of being branded by an unjust imprisonment," replied Trompe-la-Mort, raising his eyes toward heaven.

"Yes," said the young man; "they were just about to set him at liberty when he killed himself. How unlucky!"

"None but innocent people are carried away thus by their imagination," said Jacques Collin. "Notice that the robbery was committed to his prejudice."

"How much was there in it?" demanded the deep and subtle Fil-de-Soie.

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand francs," replied Jacques Collin very quietly.

The three convicts looked at one another, and withdrew from the group which all the prisoners formed about the pretended ecclesiastic.

"It's he that *scooped the girl's deep*—robbed the woman's cellar—!" whispered Fil-de-Soie to le Biffon, "and they wanted to scare us about our *balls*—five franc pieces.—"

"He'll always be the *good pal's boss*," replied la Pouraille. "Our bird hasn't flown."

La Pouraille, looking for a man upon whom he could rely, was naturally eager to find Jacques Collin an honest man; it is most commonly in prison that a man believes in what he hopes.

"I'll bet he *juggles the stork's boss*—that he outwits the attorney-general and *pulls out his aunt*—saves his friend—!" said Fil-de-Soie.

"If he succeeds," said le Biffon, "I *shan't* think him the *great boss*—God—himself; but as everybody says, he certainly has had a *puff with the baker*—smoked a pipe with the devil—."

"Didn't you hear him exclaim: 'The *baker* has given me up!'" remarked Fil-de-Soie.

"Ah!" exclaimed la Pouraille, "if he cared to *pull*

out my poll—save my head—, what *a chase I'd lead with my bit of a wad*—what a life I should lead with my share of money—, and the *yellow balls that I've stowed away*—the stolen gold that I have hidden—."

"Follow his lead,—do as he bids you—!" said Fil-de-Soie.

"You're joking?" said le Pouraille, looking at his comrade.

"You're an ass. You'll be billed through to the devil—condemned to death—. Besides, your only chance of *sticking on your pins and bolting, guzzling and prigging again* is to give him *a boost*—of keeping on your feet, of eating, drinking and stealing more is to help him along,—" replied le Biffon.

"This much is sure," continued la Pouraille, "not one of us will *peach on the boss*—will betray the master—or I'll take him along with me to the place where I'm going.—"

"He'll do as he says!" exclaimed Fil-de-Soie.

Even those persons, who feel the least sympathy for this strange society, can imagine the situation of Jacques Collin's mind, as he thought of the corpse of the idol he had worshipped for five hours that night, and the approaching death of the former companion of his chain, the future corpse of the young Corsican, Théodore. To gain an interview with the unhappy prisoner required cunning far more than is given to most men; but to rescue him needed a miracle; yet already Jacques Collin was planning this miracle.

In order to understand what Jacques Collin was

about to attempt it is important to say here that assassins, thieves and all the inmates of the galleys are not so redoubtable as men believe them. With a few very rare exceptions, these wretches are all cowards; doubtless on account of the fear which presses unceasingly at their hearts. Their faculties are continually strained to the uttermost by the excitement of robbery, and the execution of crime demands the employment of all their vital power, alertness of mind equal to the readiness of body, and an intensity that weakens the intellect. When the violent exercise of their will is past they become stupid, for the same reason that a prima donna or a dancer falls exhausted after a fatiguing step, or after one of those formidable duets, which modern composers inflict upon the public ear. In fact, malefactors are so bereft of reason, or so overpowered by fear, that they become mere children. Credulous to the last degree, they are ensnared by the simplest device. After the success of a *job,* they fall into such a state of prostration that, yielding to the peremptory need of debauchery, they make themselves drunk on wine and liquor, and rush passionately to the embraces of their women, seeking in vain for calm amid the wreck of their strength and for forgetfulness of crime in the forgetfulness of reason. In this condition they are at the mercy of the police. Once that they are arrested, they are blind; they lose their head, and feel so great a need for hope that they are ready to believe in everything; thus there is no absurdity which they cannot be induced

to admit. An example will explain to what lengths this stupidity of the *nabbed* criminal will go. Bibi Lupin secured the confession of a murderer, nineteen years old, by persuading him that minors never were executed. When the boy was transferred to the Conciergerie to undergo his sentence, when his petition had been rejected, this terrible agent of the law came to see him. "Are you certain that you are not twenty?" he asked of the boy.

"Yes, I am but nineteen years and six months," replied the murderer with perfect calm.

"Then," answered Bibi Lupin, "you have no cause to fear; you will never be twenty."—

"Why not?"

"Eh! but you'll be *mown* within three days," answered the chief of the secret service.

The murderer, who, even after his sentence, supposed that minors were never executed, collapsed like an *omelette soufflée.*

These men, rendered so cruel by the necessity of suppressing testimony, for they commit murder only to make away with proof—this is one of the arguments set forth by those who demand the abolition of capital punishment—; these giants of skill and cunning, in whom eye and strength are developed as they are among savages, become the heroes of wrong-doing only in the theatre of their exploits. When a crime has been committed their difficulties begin, for they are as stupefied before the necessity of concealing their new wealth as they had been formerly prostrated by poverty; more than

this, they are weak as the woman who has just risen from child-bed. Alarmingly energetic in their conceptions, when success comes, they behave like children. In a word their nature, like some savage beasts, is an easy prey when it has gorged its fill. In prison, these singular men are men by virtue of their dissimulation and discretion, which weakens only at the last moment when the spirit is broken and prostrated by long imprisonment.

The reader can now understand why the three convicts instead of betraying their chief, were eager to serve him; they admired him, for they suspected him of being the possessor of the seven hundred and fifty thousand stolen francs. They saw him self-possessed even under the locks of the Conciergerie, and they believed him able to take them under his protection.

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On leaving the counterfeit Spaniard, M. Gault walked back through the parlour to his office, and then went to find Bibi Lupin. He came upon the spy crouched down beneath one of the windows that opened on the yard, where he had been stationed for twenty minutes, watching through a peep-hole everything that had happened in the yard since Jacques Collin's entry.

"Not one of them has recognized him," said M. Gault, "and Napolitas, who is keeping an eye on them, has heard nothing. Last night, in all his dejection, the poor priest did not say a single word which could imply that his cassock is hiding Jacques Collin."

"That proves that he's been a prisoner before," replied the chief of the secret service.

Napolitas, Bibi Lupin's secretary, unsuspected by all the prisoners, was confined at this time within the Conciergerie, and was playing there, the part of a well-to-do young man under the charge of forgery.

"To be brief, he asks to be allowed to confess the condemned man," continued the warden.

"There lies our last chance!" exclaimed Bibi Lupin. I never thought of it before. Théodore Calvi, this Corsican, was the companion of Jacques Collin's chain; they tell me that in the *Field*

Jacques Collin used to make *plugs* for him with the greatest care."—

Convicts make a certain kind of wad which they insert between their iron rings and the skin in order to ease the weight of the ring upon their ankle bones and instep. These wads are composed of tow and linen, and in the galleys they are known as *plugs*.

"Who is watching the condemned man?" demanded Bibi Lupin of M. Gault.

"Cœur-la-Virole."

"Good, I'll turn gendarme. I'll be there, and listen to them. I'll answer for everything."

"If it is Jacques Collin, aren't you afraid of being strangled in case he recognizes you?" inquired the warden of the Conciergerie.

"As a gendarme, I shall have my sword," replied the detective; "besides, if it's Jacques Collin, he'll not do anything to convict himself; and if he's a priest, I'm quite safe."

"There's no time to lose," said M. Gault. "It's half-past eight. Father Sauteloup has finished reading Calvi the rejection of his plea; M. Sanson is awaiting the judge's orders in the main hall."

"Oh! It's for to-day that the *widow's knights* —another and a terrible name for the machine—are ordered," replied Bibi Lupin. "I can understand how the attorney-general hesitates; the fellow has always declared that he is innocent, and, in my opinion, the proofs against him are not convincing."

"He's a true Corsican," answered M. Gault;

"he has not said a word and has showed fight at every step."

The last words spoken by the warden of the Conciergerie to the chief of the secret service were an epitome of the gloomy history of condemned criminals. A man, whom justice has cut off from the number of the living, belongs to the officers of the prosecution; the prosecution is sovereign; it is dependent upon nobody; it cannot be moved unless it be by its own conscience. The prison belongs to the prosecution; it is its absolute master. Poetry has seized upon this social subject, so eminently fitted to appeal to the imagination—*the condemned criminal.* Poetry has been sublime; prose has no other resource than the actual, but the actual is so terrible that in itself it is able to wrestle with the sublimity of poetry. The life of a condemned man, who has not confessed his crimes nor his accomplices, is a prey to frightful tortures. There are no boots which crush the feet, nor waters forced into the stomach, nor hideous machines that tear the limbs asunder; but, in their stead, is torture, silent, and, so to speak, negative. The prosecution gives the condemned man up wholly to himself; it leaves him in silence and in darkness, with one companion—a *sheep*—, whom the prisoner cannot but mistrust.

The tender philanthropy of modern times believes that the atrocious punishment of isolation is her invention; she is deceived. When torture was abolished in the very natural desire to reassure the

over-delicate consciences of juries, the officers of prosecution conceived the terrible weapon that solitude gives to justice against remorse. Solitude is vacuum, and moral nature hates it quite as much as physical nature. Solitude can be dwelt in only by the man of genius, who fills it with his ideas, children of the spiritual world, or by some contemplator of divine works who sees it illuminated by the light of heaven and animated by the voice of God. With the exception of these two types, both on the threshold of paradise, solitude bears the same relation to torture that moral does to physical nature. Between solitude and torture there is all the difference which separates nervous disease from the disease which can be cured by surgery. It is suffering multiplied by the infinite. The body touches the infinite through the nervous system as the spirit penetrates thither by the thought. Thus in the annals of the Court at Paris, it is an easy matter to count the criminals who have not confessed.

This sinister situation, which, in certain cases assumes vast proportions, as for example in politics when a dynasty or a nation is at stake, will have its story told in its own volume of the HUMAN COMEDY. But, here, the description of the stone box, where, under the Restoration, the criminal court of Paris immured its condemned prisoners, may dimly show the horror that attends a sufferer's last days.

Before the Revolution of July, there existed, and there still exists to-day, at the Conciergerie a room

known as the *death chamber*. It adjoins the office, from which it is separated by a solid freestone wall, and on the opposite side is flanked by the immense wall seven or eight feet thick that strengthens a portion of the vast Salle des pas Perdus. You reach it by the first door in the long dark corridor into which you can look from the middle of the great vaulted entrance hall. This gloomy chamber is lighted by a ventilator, protected by a formidable iron grating, and invisible from the exterior; for it pierces the wall within the narrow limits between the office window, beside the entrance gate, and the lodging of the clerk of the Conciergerie, which the architect has placed like a wardrobe at the end of the entrance court. The situation of this room, shut in by four massive walls, explains why, at the time of the alterations made in the Conciergerie, it was devoted to so sinister and funereal a purpose. All escape from it is impossible. The corridor, which leads to the solitary cells and the women's quarters, opens opposite the stove, where there is always a group of gendarmes and gaolers. The ventilator, the sole opening in the external wall, is nine feet above the floor, and looks out on the first court-yard guarded by the sentries that stand at the front gate of the Conciergerie. No human power could assail the mighty walls, and besides, the condemned prisoner is always clothed in a strait-jacket that prevents him from moving his hands. He is, moreover, chained by one foot to his camp bedstead, and *a sheep*—one

of his fellow prisoners—is appointed to serve and watch him. The chamber is paved with thick slabs of stone, and the daylight is so faint that it is almost impossible to distinguish anything.

You cannot enter there without feeling chilled to the bone, even to-day, although the room has been unused for sixteen years, owing to the changes introduced into the execution of the law's decrees in Paris. Imagine the criminal there, in the company of his remorse, with the twin terrors of silence and darkness, and you will wonder that these are not enough to drive him mad. How powerful an organization must the prisoner have who can endure such a life, with the added immobility and inaction compelled by the strait-jacket.

Théodore Calvi, a Corsican then twenty-seven years of age, entrenched himself behind a barrier of absolute silence, and for two months succeeded in resisting the influence of the dungeon and the insidious friendship of the spy!—The account of the singular criminal case which led to the young Corsican's conviction, is here given, but curious as the story is the analysis must be very brief.

It is impossible to make a long digression at the end of a scene that has been already so protracted, and that offers no interest other than that which surrounds Jacques Collin, whose horrible personality, like a kind of vertebral column, forms the connecting link between *Old Goriot* and *Lost Illusions* and between *Lost Illusions* and this present Study. Moreover, the reader's imagination is free

to develop the obscure theme, which, at this moment, was causing great anxiety to the jury of the court before which Théodore Calvi had been brought for trial. For a week after the rejection of the criminal's petition by the Court of Appeals, M. de Granville's attention had been engrossed by this affair, and from day to day he delayed giving orders for the execution of the young man, so desirous was he of satisfying the jury by making it public that the prisoner had confessed his crime before he died.

A poor widow of Nanterre, whose house stood without the town which lies, as everybody knows, in the midst of the barren plain stretching between Mont Valérien, Saint Germain and the hills of Sartrouville and Argenteuil, had been robbed and murdered, a few days after she had received her share of an unexpected legacy. This share amounted to three thousand francs, a dozen spoons and forks, a gold watch and chain, and some linen. Instead of investing the three thousand francs in Paris as she was advised to do by the notary of the deceased wine merchant who had bequeathed her the inheritance, the old woman insisted upon keeping it all in her possession. In the first place, she had never seen so much money of her own before, and besides, like most peasants and people of the lower class, she suspected everybody in every kind of business transaction. After exhaustive conversations with a wine merchant of Nanterre, who was a relative both of her and of the wine merchant who had died, the widow finally resolved to buy a

life-annuity with the money, to sell her house at Nanterre, and set up as a *bourgeoise* at Saint Germain.

The house she lived in, which was surrounded by a good-sized garden, shut in by a wretched fence, was one of those miserable dwellings that the small farmers in the neighborhood of Paris build for themselves. The plaster and rough stone, so abundant at Nanterre, where the land is covered with open quarries, had been, as is generally seen about Paris, hastily put together, without any architectural plan. Such a building may be called the hut of the civilized savage. The house was composed of a ground floor and an upper floor, above which were the attics.

The woman's husband, who was a quarryman, had built the house himself, and had provided all the windows with very solid iron bars. The front door also was remarkably strong, for the man knew that he lived in a lonely spot in the open country, and what a country! His customers were among the chief master masons of Paris, so he was able to bring back from thence, on his empty carts, the more important materials needed for the house that he was building at five hundred feet from his own quarry. He chose the stuff he wanted from houses in Paris that had been torn down, and bought it at a very low price. So it was that his windows, gratings, doors, shutters and woodwork had all come from depredations authorized by the law, or were the well-chosen gifts of his customers. Whenever

he was offered the choice of two window-sashes, he selected the stronger one. In front of the house there was a large court-yard that contained the stables and was inclosed by walls from the high-road. The door was made of a strong iron grating; there were two watch-dogs in the stable, and a little dog slept in the house. Behind the house there was a garden of somewhat more than two acres in extent.

After she was left a widow, and without children, the quarryman's wife lived alone in the house with one servant. The price brought by the quarry which she sold, paid the debts of her husband, who had now been dead two years. The widow had no other property than the lonely house, where she kept cows and chickens, selling the milk and eggs at Nanterre. As she no longer employed a stableman, carter, or the laborers at the quarry, whom her husband had been used to set to all kinds of odd jobs, she let the garden run to waste, and gathered only the few herbs and vegetables that still grew in the stony soil.

As the proceeds of the house and the money she had inherited amounted to some seven or eight thousand francs, the widow thought she could live comfortably at Saint Germain on an annuity of seven or eight hundred francs that she expected to purchase with her eight thousand francs. She had already had several interviews with the notary of Saint Germain, for she refused to invest her money with the wine-merchant who promised her the annuity. The widow Pigeau's affairs were in

this condition, when one day it was observed that neither she nor her servant had appeared for some time. The gate of the court-yard, the front door of the house and the shutters were all fast closed. After three days' time, the officers of the law were informed of this state of things, and made a visit to the house. M. Popinot, an examining judge, accompanied by the public prosecutor, came from Paris, and the following facts were established:

Neither the iron gate of the court-yard nor the front door of the house showed any signs of having been tampered with. The key was still in the lock, on the inside of the front door. Not a single iron bar had been removed. The locks, shutters, and all the fastenings of the house were intact.

The walls offered no trace of having been scaled by thieves, and as the tiled chimneys had no practicable openings, it was evident that no one could have entered through them. The roofs were whole and uninjured, and bore no marks of violence. When the two magistrates, the gendarmes and Bibi Lupin reached the rooms on the second floor, they discovered the widow Pigeau and her servant-maid, both strangled in their beds by means of their own night-handkerchiefs. The three thousand francs had been taken, as well as the spoons and forks and the watch and chain. The two bodies were in a state of putrefaction, as were also those of the little dog and of a big dog in the court-yard. The garden fence was examined, and was found to be unbroken, and there were no tracks on the garden

paths. The examining judge thought it probable that the murderer had walked upon the grass, in order to avoid leaving any foot-prints, in case he had effected his entrance through the garden; but how could he have penetrated into the house itself? On the garden side the door was furnished with three iron bars that had remained untouched, and the key was in the lock, just as it had been found in the front door opening upon the court-yard.

As soon as these inexplicable facts were established by M. Popinot, by Bibi Lupin, who spent a whole day examining everything, by the public prosecutor himself, and by the commander of the post at Nanterre, the murder became a fearful problem in which the state and the law seemed destined to be worsted.

This drama that was published by the "Gazette des Tribuneaux" took place in the winter of 1828 to 1829. Heaven knows what curiosity may have been awakened in Paris by this extraordinary occurrence, but Paris has new dramas to digest every day and forgets everything. The police forget nothing. After three months of vain search, a woman of the town, who had excited the suspicions of Bibi Lupin's agents by her extravagance, and who had been under surveillance on account of her acquaintance with certain thieves, tried to induce a friend to pawn for her a dozen forks and spoons and a gold watch and chain. The friend refused the request, but the circumstance reached the ears of Bibi Lupin, who remembered the twelve forks

and spoons and the gold watch and chain that had been stolen at Nanterre. The commissioners of the Mont-de-Piété, and all the receivers of stolen goods in Paris were advised of the fact, and Bibi Lupin set a strict watch upon the girl who was known as Manon la Blonde.

It was soon discovered that Manon la Blonde was madly in love with a young man about whom very little was known, and who was supposed to be indifferent to all the blandishments of the blonde Manon. Mystery upon mystery. The young man who was watched by spies was soon found, and recognized as an escaped convict, the famous hero of the Corsican vendettas, the handsome Théodore Calvi, alias Madeleine.

One of those double-faced receivers of stolen goods who are ready to serve both thieves and police, was sent in pursuit of Théodore, and promised to buy from him the silver and the watch and chain. At the very moment that the pawnbroker from the Cour Saint Guillaume, was counting out the money to Théodore, disguised as a woman, the police made a descent upon the shop Guillaume, arrested Théodore and seized the articles.

The examination began at once, but with so little evidence it was impossible, in the opinion of the court, to secure sentence of death against the young man. Calvi was never inconsistent, and never contradicted himself. He affirmed that a countrywoman had sold him the articles at Argenteuil, and that after he had bought them, the report of the

murder committed at Nanterre had enlightened him upon the danger of possessing the silver and the watch and chain, which, as they had been mentioned in the inventory made after the death of the Paris wine-merchant, uncle of the widow Pigeau, had evidently been identified with the stolen articles. He said that as he was forced by his poverty to sell these articles, he had tried to get rid of them through a person who was in no wise connected with the affair.

Nothing farther could be extracted from the escaped convict, who, by his firmness and silence, succeeded in making the officers of the law believe that the wine-merchant of Nanterre had committed the crime, and that the merchant's wife was the woman from whom Théodore had bought the stolen articles. The unfortunate cousin of the widow Pigeau and his wife were arrested, but after a week's imprisonment and careful investigation, it was ascertained that neither husband nor wife had been away from home at the time the crime was committed. Moreover, Calvi did not recognize the merchant's wife as the woman who, according to his testimony, had sold him the silver and the trinkets.

As Calvi's concubine, who was implicated in the trial, was proved to have spent about a thousand francs in the interval between the occurrence of the murder and Calvi's attempt to pawn the silver and the watch and chain, there appeared sufficient evidence to send the convict and his

mistress before the Assizes. This murder was the eighteenth Théodore had committed; and he was condemned to death as he appeared to be guilty of this skilfully planned crime. Though he did not recognize the wife of the wine-merchant of Nanterre, he himself was recognized by both the husband and wife. The examination had proved by means of various witnesses that Théodore had lived for about a month at Nanterre; he had worked for masons there, and had been seen ill-dressed with his face covered with powder from the plaster. At Nanterre, people thought him a boy of eighteen, and yet he must have been plotting this crime for at least a month before its execution.

The prosecution believed that he had accomplices. The chimney-flues were measured with reference to the size of Manon la Blonde, to see whether it were possible that she could have slipped through one of them; but a child of six could not have passed through the tiled pipes which modern architecture has substituted for the large chimneys of former days. If it had not been for this singular and exasperating mystery, Théodore would have been executed a week earlier. The prison chaplain had totally failed, as we have seen, in eliciting a confession from him.

The whole affair and the name of Calvi had escaped the notice of Jacques Collin, who was then absorbed by his contest with Contenson, Corentin and Peyrade. Moreover, Trompe-la-Mort was endeavoring to banish from his mind all recollections

of his former *friends* and everything connected with the Palais de Justice. He trembled at the idea of meeting face to face a comrade who might demand from his *boss* an account which he could never give.

The director of the Conciergerie went immediately to the office of the attorney-general, and found the public prosecutor already there talking with M. de Granville, and holding the order for execution in his hand. M. de Granville had just come from the hôtel de Sérizy, were he had been passing the night, and was overwhelmed with fatigue and grief, as the doctors dared not as yet promise that the countess should recover her reason; yet, on account of the important execution that was to take place, he felt it his duty to spend some hours in his office after talking for a moment with the director. M. de Granville took back the order for execution from the public prosecutor and gave it to Gault.

"You are to proceed with the execution," said he, "except in case of any extraordinary circumstances, of which you must be the judge; I rely upon your discretion. You may delay the erection of the scaffold till half-past ten, so you have an hour left. In such a morning as this an hour is worth a century, and many events may happen in a century! Do not allow any hope of a reprieve. Let the prisoner be dressed for death, and if there be no farther disclosure give the order to Sanson at half-past nine. Meantime, let him wait!"

As the director of the prison left the office of the attorney-general he met in the vaulted corridor

opening into the gallery M. Camusot, who was on his way to see M. de Granville. Gault had a rapid conversation with the judge, and after informing him of all that had happened at the Conciergerie, with reference to Jacques Collin, he hastened thither himself to arrange an interview between Trompe-la-Mort and Théodore. He would not, however, allow the self-styled ecclesiastic to hold any communication with the condemned prisoner until Bibi Lupin, perfectly disguised as a gendarme, had replaced the *sheep* who had been watching the young Corsican.

It is impossible to describe the profound astonishment of the three convicts when they saw a gaoler come to take Jacques Collin into the cell of the condemned man. They all bounded simultaneously toward the chair in which Jacques Collin was sitting.

—"It is to-day, isn't it, Monsieur Julien?" asked Fil-de-Soie of the gaoler.

—"Oh! yes, Charlot is waiting," answered the gaoler with perfect indifference.

Charlot is the name that prisoners and the officers of prisons give to the executioner of Paris. It dates from the Revolution of 1789, and the sensation it now produced upon the prisoners was immense. They all looked at one another.

"It is all over!" the gaoler continued; "the order for the execution has been given to M. Gault, and the sentence has been read."

—"Then," said la Pouraille, "has the pretty Madeleine received the sacraments?"

He drew in a long breath as if it were his case.

"Poor little Théodore!" cried le Biffon, "he is such a nice boy; it is a great pity to come to the guillotine so young."—

The gaoler moved toward the gate, expecting Jacques Collin to follow him; but the Spaniard walked slowly, and when he was within ten feet of Julien, appeared to totter and beckoned to la Pouraille to give him his arm.

"He is a murderer!" said Napolitas to the priest, pointing to la Pouraille and offering his own arm.

"No, in my eyes he is but an unfortunate man," —answered Trompe-la-Mort with the presence of mind and the unction of an archbishop of Cambrai.

He drew away from Napolitas, whom he suspected at the first glance; then he added in a low voice to the *pals:*

"He is on the first step of the *Monastery of Sorrowful Mount*—the scaffold—, but I am the prior of it. I am going to show you how I can get round the *stork*,—fool the attorney-general—and *pull the boys poll* from his claws."

"On account of his *montante!*"—breeches—said Fil-de-Soie, smiling.

"I want to give this soul to heaven!" he added fervently, seeing that he was surrounded by several other prisoners.

He rejoined the gaoler at the gate.

—"He has come to save Théodore," said Fil-de-Soie; "we guessed right. What a *boss* he is."—

"How can he? The *knights of the guillotine.*

are there; he can't even see him," objected le Biffon.

—"He's got the *baker* behind him," cried la Pouraille. "What, he *prig our wad?* He loves his *pals* too much for that! Besides he depends too much on us. They tried to make us *peach* on him, but we're no such fools. If he saves Théodore, he shall have my secret!"

These last words had the effect of increasing the devotion of the three convicts to their god; for now their famous *boss* was their only hope.

In spite of Théodore's danger, Jacques Collin did not forget to play his part to perfection. He, who knew the Conciergerie as well as he knew the three galleys, mistook his way so naturally that the gaoler was continually obliged to direct him, until they reached the registration office. There Jacques Collin's first glance met a tall stout man—leaning against the stove,—whose long red face was not lacking in a certain kind of distinction and whom he recognized as Sanson.

—"Are you the chaplain, sir?" said he, going up to him politely.

The mistake was so ghastly that the spectators were appalled.

"No, sir," replied Sanson, "I have other duties."

Sanson, father of the last executioner of that name, who has been recently deprived of office, was a son of the man who executed Louis XVI.

After the exercise of this calling had been four hundred years in the family, the heir of so many

torturers had attempted to rid himself of the hereditary burden. The Sansons had been executioners at Rouen for two centuries before they were promoted to the first position of the kind in the kingdom, and from father to son they had executed the sentences of the law since the XIII. century. There are few families which can offer the example of an office or a title that has descended from father to son for six centuries. Just at the time that the young man had been made captain of a cavalry regiment, and saw a fine military career marked out for him, his father compelled him to lend him his aid in the execution of the king, and afterward, he named him his assistant, when in 1793 there were two scaffolds permanently erected, one at the Barrière du Trône, and the other in the Place de Grève. This terrible functionary, now about sixty years of age, was remarkable for his gentleman-like address, for his calm and quiet manner, and for the great scorn he showed toward Bibi Lupin and his acolytes, the purveyors of the guillotine. The only indication of his inheriting the blood of his ancestors, the torturers of the Middle Ages, lay in the formidable size and thickness of his hands. He was well educated, very tenacious of his privileges as a citizen and an elector, and was said to be passionately fond of gardening. Tall and broad-shouldered, with a quiet dignified demeanor, and a high bald forehead, he looked far more like a member of the English aristocracy than an executioner. Thus a Spanish ecclesiastic

would have been likely to make the same error that Jacques Collin made voluntarily.

—"He's no convict," said the head gaoler to the warden.

"I begin to think so myself," thought M. Gault, as he nodded to his subordinate.

Jacques Collin was introduced into a kind of a small cellar, where he found young Théodore bound in a strait-jacket and seated on the edge of his miserable camp bedstead. A momentary gleam of light shone from the corridor and Trompe-la-Mort instantly recognized Bibi Lupin in the gendarme who was standing there leaning on his sword.

—"*Io sono Gaba-Morto! Parla nostro italiano,*" said Jacques Collin hastily. "*Vengo ti salvar.*" —I am Trompe-la-Mort. Speak Italian, I have come to save your life.—

The whole conversation of the friends was going to be unintelligible to Bibi Lupin, but as he was placed there to guard the prisoner, he could not leave his post. The rage of the head of the detective police was indescribable.

Théodore Calvi was a young man of pale olive complexion, light hair, and deep-set eyes of a dull blue colour; he was well proportioned and possessed prodigious muscular strength hidden under the lymphatic exterior natural to so many southerners. His face would have been charming, were it not for the arched eyebrows, and the retreating forehead that lent it a sinister expression; and without the cruel red lips and the twitching of the

muscles indicative of the Corsican, who is so quick to murder in a sudden quarrel.

Surprised to hear the tones of Jacques Collin's voice, Théodore raised his head abruptly, believing himself to be under some hallucination; but as in two months' time he had become accustomed to the extreme darkness of his stone cell, he looked at the pretended priest and sighed deeply. He did not recognize Jacques Collin, whose face, seamed by the action of sulphuric acid, no longer appeared to him to be that of his *boss*.

—"It is I, your own Jacques; I am dressed as a priest, and am come to save you. Don't be fool enough to show that you recognize me, but pretend to confess."

Jacques Collin said this very rapidly, and then addressing the gendarme, he added:

"The young man is much overcome; the idea of death terrifies him, and he is going to confess everything."

"Tell me something that will prove to me that you are *he*, for you have only *his* voice," said Théodore.

—"Do you see ? the poor lad is telling me that he is innocent," said Jacques Collin to the gendarme.

Bibi Lupin dared not speak, for fear of being recognized.

—"*Sempre-mi!*" said Jacques Collin, returning to Théodore, and whispering the password in his ear.

—"*Sempre-ti!*" answered the young man replying to the password. "You are my *boss* indeed!"—

—"Did you do that business?"

—"Yes."

—"Tell me everything, so I may know what I must do to save you; it is time, for Charlot is waiting."

The Corsican threw himself on his knees as if he meant to confess. Bibi Lupin did not know what to do, for this conversation was so rapid that it occupied less time than is needed to read it. Théodore related promptly the circumstances that were known concerning his crime, as Jacques Collin was still in ignorance of them.

—"The jury have condemned me without proof," said he as he ended.

—"Do you want to argue now, child, when they are going to cut your hair?"—

—"I ought to be convicted only of pawning the silver and the watch and chain. Yet this is how the law works, and in Paris, too!"—

—"But how did you do the job?" demanded Trompe-la-Mort.

—"I'll tell you. Since I last saw you I made the acquaintance of a little Corsican girl, whom I met when I arrived at *Pantin*—Paris—"

—"When a man is idiot enough to fall in love with a woman," exclaimed Jacques Collin, "she always brings him to grief!—Women are tigers at large, tigers that chatter and are always admiring themselves in looking-glasses.—You've been a fool!"

"But—"

—"Come, what did the damned *moll* have to do with this business?"

—"The little love of a girl, slim as an eel and nimble as a monkey, got into the house through the top of the oven, and let me in by the door. We had poisoned the dogs and they were all dead. I laid the two women *cold.* As soon as we had got the money, Ginetta locked the door and went out by the same way she came in."

"You deserve to live for such a clever plan as that," said Jacques Collin, who admired the skill with which the crime had been accomplished, as a sculptor admires a beautiful statue.

"I was fool enough to waste all that cleverness for a beggarly three thousand francs."—

—"No, for a woman!" returned Jacques Collin. "I have already told you that they rob us of our wits!"—

He cast a look of flaming scorn upon Théodore.

"You were not with me anymore," replied the Corsican "and I had no one to advise me."

—"Do you love the girl?" demanded Jacques Collin, sensible to the reproach contained in Théodore's answer.

—"Ah! If I desire life, it's now more for your sake than for hers."

—"Put your mind at ease; my name is not Trompe-la-Mort for nothing! I will be responsible for your life."

—"What! is it life?" cried the young Corsican, raising his manacled arms toward the damp vaulted roof.

—"My little *Madeleine*, you must make up your mind to return to the *Fields*," answered Jacques Collin.

"You must not expect to be garlanded with roses like the prize ox at Shrovetide.—If they want to send us to Rochefort, it will mean that they are trying to get rid of us, but I shall arrange to get you dispatched to Toulon. From there you can escape and return to *Pantin*—Paris,— where I shall manage to set you up in some comfortable little business."—

Théodore heaved a sigh, such as had seldom resounded under that inflexible roof, a sigh of joy at the prospect of deliverance. The stone walls sent back the echo, which has no equal in the musical scale, into the astonished ears of Bibi Lupin.

—"It is the effect of the absolution I have promised him, on account of his confession," said Jacques Collin to the chief of the secret service. "You see, sir, the Corsicans are very devout. But he is *spotless as a lamb*, and I am going to try to save him."—

"God be with you, sir,"—said Théodore in French to the Abbé.

*

Trompe-la-Mort, more Carlos Herrera, more priest than ever, left the condemned cell, and rushing out into the corridor, presented himself to M. Gault, with an expression of feigned horror upon his countenance.

—"Sir, the young man is innocent and has disclosed to me the name of the guilty person.—Like a true Corsican he was going to die for a mistaken point of honor.—Go and ask the attorney-general to spare me five minutes' audience. M. de Granville cannot refuse an instant hearing to a Spanish priest, who has suffered so much at the hands of French law."

—"I will go immediately," answered M. Gault, to the great astonishment of all who witnessed this extraordinary scene.

—"Please have me taken back to the court-yard, while I am waiting," continued Jacques Collin, "so that I may complete the conversion of a criminal, whose heart I have already touched.—Ah! these people have so much heart!"

His speech produced a stir among the persons present. The gendarmes, the keeper of the books, the gaolers, Sanson and his assistant who were all awaiting the order to "set up the machine," as they call it in the prison; all these persons,

ordinarily unsusceptible to emotion, were moved by a curiosity that may be easily imagined.

At this moment was heard the sound of a carriage drawn by spirited horses, stopping in a significant manner on the quay outside the gate of the Conciergerie. The carriage door was opened and the steps let down so rapidly that the prison officials expected the arrival of a great personage. Presently a lady waving a bit of blue paper in her hand presented herself at the iron gate, followed by a footman and a groom. She was dressed magnificently in black, her bonnet was covered with a veil, and she was drying her eyes with a large embroidered handkerchief.

Jacques Collin instantly recognized Asia, or to give his aunt her rightful name, Jacqueline Collin.

This horrible old woman was worthy of her nephew, all whose thoughts were concentrated upon the prisoner that he was defending with an intelligence and perspicacity, at least equal to those of the law. She had obtained a permit, given the night before, in the name of the maid of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, upon the recommendation of M. de Sérizy, to hold communication with Lucien and the Abbé Carlos Herrera as soon as he should be released from solitary confinement. The chief of the department of prisons had written a few lines upon the permit, which, moreover, by its color alone, indicated powerful recommendation, as these permits, like complimentary theatre

tickets, differ in form and color from those which are usually given.

So the turnkey hastened to unlock the gate, influenced especially by the sight of the plumed groom, whose green and gold livery was as brilliant as that of a Russian general, and vouched for the presence of an aristocratic visitor of almost royal pretensions.

"Oh! my dear Abbé!" cried the pretended marchioness, bursting into a torrent of tears at the sight of the ecclesiastic, "how could they shut you up here, even for a moment; you, who are such a holy man!"

The warden took the permit and read: *"On the recommendation of His Excellency, the Count de Sérizy."*

"Ah! Madame de San Esteban, Madame la Marquise," exclaimed Carlos Herrera, "what true devotion!"

—"Madame, there is no communication allowed with the prisoners here," said good old Gault. He tried at the same time to bar the way to the advancing mass of black silk and lace.

"Still, at this distance!" begged Jacques Collin, "and before all of you!"—he added, looking round at the assembled company.

Jacques Collin's aunt, whose costume had an amazing effect upon them all, clerk, warden, gaolers and gendarmes, was redolent of musk. Besides three thousand francs worth of lace, she wore a black cashmere shawl that must have cost six

thousand. Her groom was parading the court-yard of the Conciergerie with all the insolence of a lackey who thinks himself indispensable to an exacting mistress of high station. He did not speak to the footman, who had taken up his post at the door opening on the quay, which was left open all day.

—"What do you want, and what am I to do?" said Madame de San Esteban, in the slang dialect that aunt and nephew had agreed to use.

This slang consisted in giving words terminations in *ar* or *or*, *al* or *i*, and in lengthening them, whether they were French or slang, so as to render them unintelligible. It was a diplomatic cipher applied to language.

—"Put all the letters in a safe place, choose those among them that are most compromising for the ladies, dress yourself in rags, and come back to the Salle des pas Perdus to wait for my orders."

Asia, or Jacqueline, as she really was, knelt down to receive a benediction, which the sham priest pronounced with evangelical unction.

—"*Addio, marchesa!*" said he aloud, and then added in their own slang, "find Europe and Paccard with the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs they stole, for I must have them."

—"Paccard is here," answered the pious marquise, looking tearfully toward the groom.

His aunt's ready wit not only forced a smile from Jacques Collin, but even surprised him, whom nobody else in the world could have surprised.

The pretended marquise turned toward the spectators like a woman in the habit of striking an attitude, and said in bad French:

—"The good man is in despair that he cannot go to his child's funeral; this unfortunate mistake of the police has disclosed his secret.—I am on my way to the requiem mass. There, sir," said she to M. Gault, as she handed him a purse of gold, "here is something for the relief of the poor prisoners."

—"That's a good move," whispered her nephew, much pleased.

Jacques Collin followed the gaoler into the prison yard.

Bibi Lupin, now in despair, succeeded at last in attracting the attention of a gendarme, to whom he had been *hemming* significantly ever since the departure of Jacques Collin, and the man came to take his place in the cell of the condemned. Trompe-la-Mort's enemy was too late to see the lady, who had driven away in her brilliant equipage, but her voice, which he heard, was suggestive of drink, in spite of its disguise.

—"Three hundred *balls*—francs—for the prisoners!" said the head gaoler, showing Bibi Lupin the purse that M. Gault had given to his clerk.

—"Let me see, Monsieur Jacomety," said Bibi Lupin.

The chief of the secret service took the purse, poured the gold into his hand and examined it carefully.

—"It is really gold,"—he said, "and the purse has a coat of arms. Ah! how consummately clever the scoundrel is! He can take us all in, and whenever he chooses!—He ought to be shot down like a dog!"

—"Why do you say that?" asked the clerk taking back the purse.

—"The woman must be a thief!"—cried Bibi Lupin, stamping with rage on the pavement outside the prison door.

His words produced a great sensation among the spectators grouped at a little distance from M. Sanson, who still stood leaning against the large stove in the middle of the vast vaulted hall, waiting for an order to make the criminal's toilet, and set up the guillotine in the Place de Grève.

After re-entering the prison-yard Jacques Collin walked up to his *friends* with the step that is peculiar to prisoners.

—"What have you on hand?" he asked of la Pouraille.

—"I'm in a bad way," answered the murderer, whom Jacques Collin had drawn aside. "What I need now is a friend I can count on."

—"Why?"

La Pouraille told the story of his crimes to his chief, speaking in his dialect, ending with the details of the murder and robbery he had committed in the Crottat household.

—"I congratulate you," said Jacques Collin. "You did well, but I think you made a mistake."

"What was it?"

"As soon as you had finished your business you should have got a Russian passport, disguised yourself as a Russian prince, and bought a carriage with armorial bearings; then you could have gone boldly to a banker to deposit your money, and asked for a letter of credit on Hamburg. Afterward, it would have been an easy matter for you to take the post, accompanied by a valet, a maid-servant and your mistress dressed like a princess, and at Hamburg you could have embarked for Mexico. With two hundred and eighty thousand francs in gold, a fellow of spirit can do what he wants and go where he pleases, you fool!"

"Oh! you can think of these things, because you are the *boss!*—You'll never lose your *poll*, but I"—

—"I may as well tell you that giving good advice to a man in your position is like wasting good broth on a dead man," rejoined Jacques Collin, fixing his fascinating glance upon his comrade.

"That may be true," said la Pouraille doubtfully, "but please give me the broth all the same; if it doesn't prove nourishing, I'll make a footbath of it—"

—"Here you are seized by the *stork* with five considerable robberies and three murders on your head, the last one concerning two rich *bourgeois*—No jury likes to have *bourgeois* killed either.—You'll certainly be billed through to the devil; there isn't the least hope for you."

—"They've all told me the same thing," replied la Pouraille, ruefully.

"My aunt Jacqueline, whom I have just been talking with, before all the prison officials, and who is, as you know, a *mother* to all our good comrades, told me that the *stork* wanted to get rid of you, because you are considered dangerous."

—"But," said la Pouraille, with an ingenuousness that showed how completely thieves are convinced of their *natural* right to rob; "I have money enough now; what can they be afraid of?"

—"We have no time for philosophising," said Jacques Collin. "We must return to your situation."—

—"What is it you want of me?" demanded la Pouraille, interrupting his master.

—"You shall see! A dead dog has his worth."

—"For others!" said la Pouraille.

—"I will let you help in my game!" replied Jacques Collin.

—"Even that is something!"—said the murderer. "What else?"

—"I don't ask where your money is, but I want to know what you mean to do with it."

—La Pouraille watched closely the inscrutable expression of his *boss*, as the latter continued coolly:

—"Have you any *moll* that you love, or a child or any *pal* you care to help along? I shall be outside the walls in an hour, and I can do anything for any friends of yours."

La Pouraille still hesitated, and could not make up his mind. Jacques Collin brought forward a final argument.

—"Your share in our common funds is thirty thousand francs; are you going to leave them to the *pals?* or do you mean to give them to somebody in particular? The money is safe, and I can hand it over this evening to anybody you may wish to bequeath it to."

La Pouraille could not conceal his pleasure.

—"Now I have him!" thought Jacques Collin.—"But there is no time to waste; think quickly!"—he went on, in a whisper. "We haven't ten minutes to ourselves, old fellow."—"The attorney-general will send for me, and I'm to have a conference with him. I have tight hold of the man, and I can twist the *stork's neck.* I am certain to save Madeleine."

—"If you save Madeleine, dear boss, you might save me—"

—"Don't waste your breath," said Jacques Collin abruptly. "Make your will."

—"Well, I should like to give the money to la Gonore," answered la Pouraille, sadly.

"Indeed!—Is she your mistress then, the widow of Moses, the Jew, who was at the head of the southern swindlers?" inquired Jacques Collin.

Like all great generals, Trompe-la-Mort had a personal knowledge of all his troops.

"Yes, that is she," said la Pouraille, extremely flattered.

"She is a pretty woman," said Jacques Collin, who understood perfectly how to work his terrible machines, "and shrewd too. She's a clever girl, and *honest* into the bargain. She's really an accomplished thief. So you had la Gonore for an ally, did you? It was stupid of you to get into trouble when you had a mistress like her. You fool! You ought to have set up in some respectable trade, and have scraped along together!—What sort of *prigging* is she engaged in?"

—"She lives in the rue Sainte Barbe and keeps a house—"

—"So you make her your heiress? You see the result, old fellow, when a man is fool enough to love one of those hussies."

—"Yes, but don't give her a penny till I have kicked the bucket!"

—"I promise," said Jacques Collin, seriously. "Then you leave nothing to the *pals?*"

—"Nothing; they betrayed me!" replied la Pouraille, vindictively.

—"Who sold you? Do you want me to revenge you?" asked Jacques Collin, trying to stir the last chord that could vibrate in la Pouraille's heart at a critical moment like this.

—"Who knows, old *pal*, that I couldn't manage to revenge you and make your peace with the *stork* at the same time?"

The murderer stared at his *boss*, dazed with joy.

—"But," began the *boss*, replying to the speaking expression of his countenance, "I am now

acting this little comedy for Théodore alone. If it succeeds, old boy, I might do a great deal for a friend of mine, and you are one."

—"If I can only see you able to put off the ceremony for poor little Théodore, I will do anything you want."

—"I have done it already, for I'm sure of *pulling his poll out* all right. You see, la Pouraille, if we mean to get out of this *mess* we must all stick to one another.—Nobody can do anything by himself."—

—"That's true!" cried la Pouraille.

La Pouraille's confidence and fanatical faith in his *boss* was now so complete that he hesitated no longer.

He then disclosed the names of his accomplices, a secret which he had kept inviolate until then. This was all that Jacques Collin wanted to know.

—"Here's my secret! Ruffard, Bibi Lupin's agent, went thirds with Godet and me in the job, which we had long been planning—"

—"Arrache Laine?"—exclaimed Jacques Collin, giving Ruffard his thief's name.

—"Yes, that's he, and the rogues sold me because I knew the place where they kept their money, and they didn't know mine."

—"You *grease my boots*—are making it easy for me—my love!" said Jacques Collin.

"Why?"

"See," Jacques answered, "what you gain by trusting me!—Now, I shall make your revenge a

point of my game—! I don't ask you to tell me where you keep your money, you will tell me that at the last moment, but tell me all about Ruffard and Godet."

—"You are our *boss* and always will be, so I have no secrets from you," replied la Pouraille. "My money is in la Gonore's *deep*—cellar—."

—"Can you trust your mistress then?"

—"Oh! she knows nothing of the performance!" la Pouraille went on. "I made la Gonore tipsy, although she wouldn't tell to save her neck. Still such a lot of gold!"

—"Yes, it would be enough to turn the milk of the purest conscience," said Jacques Collin.

—"In that way I could work with no eye upon me. All the hens had gone to roost. The gold lies three feet below ground, behind the wine-bottles, and I covered it with a layer of pebbles and mortar."

—"Good," said Jacques Collin. "And where do the others keep their *wads?*"

—"Ruffard keeps his share in la Gonore's house, in the very room of the poor creature, whom he holds in his power, in this way; for she might be discovered to be an accomplice in receiving stolen goods, and end her days at Saint Lazare."

—"The rogue! It takes the *peelers* to train a thief properly!" said Jacques.

—"Godet's *wad* is at his sister's, who is a clear-starcher and an honest girl. She might easily get five years in jail, without suspecting why. He

took up the tiles of the floor, fitted them back again, and decamped."

—"Can you guess what I want of you?" said Jacques Collin, fixing his magnetic gaze upon la Pouraille.

—"What is it?"

"I want you to take Théodore's concern upon your shoulders—"

La Pouraille gave an expressive shrug, and then promptly resumed his obedient attitude, under his master's eye.

—"What! Are you objecting already? Do you want to manage my game? What do you suppose is the difference between three or four murders?"

—"There may not be much difference !"

—"By the god of *pals*, you have no blood in your veins! And I was thinking of saving you!"

—"How could you?"

—"You're a fool! If you offer to return the money to the family you will get off with the *field* for life. I wouldn't give a straw for your *poll* if they had the money, but at this very moment you are worth seven hundred thousand francs, you idiot, you!"

"O! *boss!*" cried la Pouraille, in ecstasy.

—"And," Jacques Collin continued, "we can accuse Ruffard of the murders.—That will put an end to Bibi Lupin at once!—I have him!"

La Pouraille was completely dazed by this new idea; his eyes opened wider and wider, and he stood motionless as a statue. It was three months

since he had been arrested, and he was on the eve of appearing before the Court of Assizes; he had asked the advice of his friends in prison, but he had not told them of his accomplices, and an investigation of his crimes had left him so utterly despondent that nobody had been clever enough to think of this plan. So this slender hope made him almost beside himself.

—"Have Ruffard and Godet had a spree yet? Have they been airing any of their *shiners*—gold pieces?—" asked Jacques Collin.

—"They dare not," replied la Pouraille.

"The scoundrels are waiting for my head to be *mowed*. That's the news that my mistress sent me by la Biffe, when she came to see le Biffon."

—"We shall have all the money in twenty-four hours, then!" exclaimed Jacques Collin. "The wretches won't be able to make restitution as you can; you will be white as snow, and they will be stained with all the blood! I shall take care to have it believed that you were an honest fellow misled by them. There will be money enough to get alibis on your other charges, and once in the *field*—for you'll have to go back there—you can make your escape somehow.—It is a nasty kind of life, but still it's life!"

La Pouraille's eyes expressed a state of delirious excitement.

—"With seven hundred thousand francs you have many chances, old fellow!" said Jacques Collin, filling his comrade with intoxicating hopes.

"Boss! Boss!"

"I'll bewilder the attorney-general!—Ah! Ruffard shall *dance* for this; he's a police agent and fair prey. Bibi Lupin is *cooked!*"

"It's a go!" cried la Pouraille with savage joy. "Give me your orders, and I'll obey."

He hugged Jacques Collin, with tears in his eyes, for his head felt firm upon his shoulders.

—"That's not all," said Jacques Collin. "The *stork* has a difficult digestion, especially when there is a revelation of new facts. What we must do now is to bring a false charge against some *moll.*"

—"How can we? and what would be the good of it?" asked the murderer.

—"Help me, and you'll see!"—replied Trompe-la-Mort.

He then related briefly the story of the crime committed at Nanterre, showing la Pouraille the need of finding a woman who would consent to play Ginetta's part. Then he and la Pouraille, who was now in good spirits, walked toward le Biffon.

"I know how much you love la Biffe,—"said Jacques Collin to le Biffon.

There was a dreadful poem to be read in le Biffon's look.

—"What is she to do while you are in the *field?*"

A tear softened le Biffon's savage eyes.

—"Suppose I got her locked up in a house of correction for women,—at the Force, the Madelonettes, or Saint-Lazare,—for the year? That would

cover the time of your trial, your departure, your arrival at the *field*, and your escape."

—"You can't work miracles, and she's *clean of this job*," replied la Biffe's lover.

—"Oh! le Biffon!" said la Pouraille, "our *boss* is more powerful than God."

—"What is your password with her?" Jacques Collin inquired of le Biffon, with all the assurance of a master who never takes a refusal.

—"*'A night in Paris.'* When she hears that, she will know you come from me, and if you want her to obey you, show her a five-franc piece, and say the word *'Tondif!'* "

—"She will be convicted at la Pouraille's trial, and released for confessing the matter after a year in prison," said Jacques Collin, slowly, with his eye upon la Pouraille.

La Pouraille understood the plot and promised his master with a look that he would do his best to make le Biffon co-operate in persuading la Biffe to assume a pretended complicity in the crime he was about to take upon his own shoulders.

—"Good-bye, my children. You will soon learn that I have saved the boy from *Charlot's* clutches," said Trompe-la-Mort. "Yes, Charlot was in his office, with his attendants, waiting to make Madeleine's *toilet.* There," he added, "the attorney-general has sent some one for me, now."

It was as he said; a gaoler came through the gate and beckoned to this extraordinary man, now roused by the danger of his favorite, the young

Corsican, to regain possession of his savage power for struggling against society.

It may be worth while to observe that at the moment when Jacques Collin was robbed of Lucien's body, he made a mighty resolution to attempt a final incarnation, not in the person of a human being, but in the likeness of a thing. He decided upon the fatal course that Napoleon adopted when he stepped upon the boat that was to carry him to the "Bellérophon." Owing to a strange concurrence of circumstances, everything aided to keep his evil and corrupt genius in the enterprise he had marked out for it.

*

Although the unexpected ending of Jacques Collin's criminal life may lose something in its character of the marvelous,—a quality to be obtained now-a-days only by the wildest improbabilities—before entering the office of the attorney-general, we must follow Madame Camusot in the various visits she made, while the events related above were taking place at the Conciergerie. One of the most serious obligations of the historian of manners, is to try never to introduce dramatic incidents at the expense of the truth, especially when truth itself happens to be romantic. Human society, above all, in Paris, admits of such startling possibilities, and such intricate and capricious associations of circumstances, that the most inventive imagination is outstripped at every turn. Truth soars boldly to situations outside of the domain of art, so improbable and indecorous are they, unless the writer soften, purify and chasten them.

Madame Camusot undertook to invent a costume for the morning that should be as near good taste as possible, and this was a difficult task for the wife of a judge who had been living in the provinces for nearly six years. It was very important for her, however, to avoid encountering any criticism from the Marquise d' Espard, or the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, whom she meant to call upon

between eight and nine o'clock in the morning. Amélie-Cécile Camusot, although born a Thirion, only half succeeded, we must confess, and in a matter of dress, a miss is as good as a mile.

People little know the usefulness of Parisian women to men who are ambitious; they are as necessary in the great world as they are in the world of thieves, where, as we have just seen, they play an essential part. For instance, suppose that, under penalty of being left behind in the arena, a man is forced to address himself to the Keeper of the Seals, who was a great personage at the time of the Restoration. Choose a man who is placed in favorable circumstances, say a judge, that is, a person who is familiar with the house. He is obliged to secure an interview with the head of a department or a private secretary, or a general secretary, and to show some adequate reason for obtaining an immediate audience. A Keeper of the Seals can never be seen at once. In the middle of the day, if he is not at the Chamber, he is at the council of ministers, or else he is signing papers, or giving audiences. In the morning he is sleeping, though no one knows where. In the evening he has public and social duties to fulfil. If every judge could insist upon an audience on any pretext whatever, the chief officer of justice would be besieged. The object for which a private and immediate interview is requested is, therefore, subjected to the consideration of an intermediary power, who may bar the passage like a closed door, even though the

way is forstalled by no other competitor. But when one woman goes to see another she can walk into her bedroom without delay, and succeed in rousing the curiosity of either the mistress or the maid, especially when the mistress is absorbed in some important interest or pressing necessity.

Madame d' Espard, who represented all the authority of a minister, may be taken as an illustration of feminine power. When she chose to write a little perfumed note it was instantly carried by her lackey to the minister's valet. When the minister awakes the note is immediately handed to him, and he reads it without delay. No matter how urgent the duties of his office, he finds personal pleasure in calling upon one of the queens of Paris, who was a power of the Faubourg Saint Germain, and a favorite of Madame, of the Dauphiness, or of the King. Casimir-Perier, the only real prime minister produced by the Revolution of July, left everything to pay a visit to an ex-first gentleman of the bed-chamber of Charles X.

Upon this theory, we can understand the power of the announcement: "Madame, Madame Camusot is here to see you on very pressing business, which you know of," made to Madame d' Espard by her waiting-maid, who believed her mistress to be awake.

The Marquise ordered Amélie to be introduced forthwith, and the judge's wife obtained an attentive hearing when she began, as follows:

—"Madame la Marquise, we have ruined ourselves by revenging you—"

—"What do you mean, my dear?" said the Marquise, looking at Madame Camusot, who was standing in the half-light of the open door. "You look fascinating this morning, in that charming little hat. Where did you find a shape like it?—"

—"You are very kind Madame,—but you must know that the manner in which Camusot conducted Lucien de Rubempré's examination, reduced the young man to such despair, that he hung himself in prison—"

—"What will become of Madame de Sérizy?" cried the Marquise," pretending not to know anything about the tragedy, so that she might listen to the particulars over again.

—"Alas! She is supposed to be crazy,"—answered Amélie. "Oh! If you can only induce His Grace to send a courier to the Palais de Justice for my husband, the minister will hear strange secrets from him, which he will certainly feel it his duty to tell the king.—In that way, Camusot's enemies will be forced to keep silence."

—"Who are Camusot's enemies?" inquired the Marquise.

—"The attorney-general and now M. de Sérizy, besides."—

—"Don't be afraid, my dear," replied Madame d' Espard, who owed to M. de Granville and M. de Sérizy her defeat in the shameful suit she had brought for the purpose of obtaining an injunction against her husband. "I will defend you. I never forget my friends nor my enemies."

She rang, and ordered the curtains drawn aside; the daylight poured into the room. Then asking for her desk, which her maid brought to her, the marchioness rapidly scribbled a little note.

—"Tell Godard to take a horse and carry this note to the Chancellerie; there is no answer," she said to her maid.

The woman left the room hastily, but in spite of her orders, lingered outside the door for some minutes.

—"There is some great mystery, then?" demanded Madame d'Espard. "Tell me all about it, my dear. Did Clotilde de Grandlieu have any part in all this?"

"You will hear everything from His Grace, madame, but my husband told me nothing; he merely warned me of his danger. It would be better for us to have Madame de Sérizy die than to have her live insane."

—"Poor woman!" said the marquise; "but wasn't she half mad already?"

Women of fashion have a hundred ways of pronouncing the same phrase, that show an acute observer the infinite variety of sounds in the musical scale. The whole soul may be expressed in the voice as well as in the eye; it may be as readily impressed on air as it is on light, those two mediums, through which the eyes and the throat are able to act. By the accent with which the marquise pronounced the two words, "poor woman," she betrayed the joys of triumph and satisfied

hatred. There was no misfortune she did not wish for Lucien's patroness! The insatiable hatred that survives the death of its object has something appalling in its intensity, and even Madame Camusot, who had a harsh, vindictive and mischief-making nature, was shocked. She found nothing to say in return, and was silent.

—"Diane told me that Léontine had gone to the prison," Madame d'Espard went on. "The poor duchess is in despair over the scandal, for she is weak enough to love Madame de Sérizy. That is easy to understand, however, for they both adored that little fool of a Lucien, and almost at the same time; nothing unites or separates two women like paying their devotions at the same altar. So the dear creature spent two hours yesterday in Léontine's room. It seems the poor countess said dreadful things, quite disgusting in fact.—A well-bred woman should never allow herself to be subject to such outbursts!—Fie! It was a disgraceful passion.—The duchess was pale as death when she came to see me, though she was full of courage! There is something monstrous about this whole thing."—

"My husband will tell everything to the Keeper of the Seals, so that he may justify himself; for they wanted to save Lucien, and he only did his duty, Madame la Marquise. An examining judge is obliged to question prisoners privately, and within the time the law prescribes.—It was necessary to ask the poor little wretch some questions, and he

didn't understand that it was merely a form, so he confessed at once—"

—"He was always a silly, saucy fellow," said Madame d'Espard, dryly.

The judge's wife said nothing, as she listened to this judgment.

—"Though we failed in getting an injunction against M. d'Espard, it was not Camusot's fault, and I shall always remember that," the marquise continued, after a pause. "It was Lucien, M. de Sérizy, M. de Bauvan and M. de Granville that made us lose the case. God will help me, in time, and every man of them will come to grief. Don't worry any more. I will dispatch the Chevalier d'Espard to the Keeper of the Seals, and make him send for your husband, if you really think it is of use—"

—"Ah! Madame!"—

—"Listen to me," said the marquise, "I promise you the decoration of the Legion of Honor, at once, to-morrow! It will be a public recognition of your husband's conduct in this affair. Yes, it will be incriminating to Lucien, too, and everybody will believe him guilty. A man rarely hangs himself for amusement.—Good-bye, my dear!"

Ten minutes later, Madame Camusot entered the bedroom of the beautiful Diane de Maufrigneuse who had never slept, though it had struck nine, and she had gone to bed at one o'clock the night before.

A duchess may be unfeeling by nature, yet hard

as her heart may be, she cannot see a friend in the paroxysms of madness without some trace of deep feeling.

Moreover, though Diane's connection with Lucien had been broken eighteen months before, it was still fresh enough in her memory to allow his tragic death to give her a violent shock. All night long Diane had seen before her the handsome youth, the charming poetic lover, hanging as Léontine had so graphically described him, in the ravings of her delirium. She had kept Lucien's eloquent, rapturous letters, that might be compared to those written by Mirabeau to Sophie, save that these were more literary and careful in form, as they had been dictated by vanity, the strongest of human passions! Lucien's head had been turned by the happiness of possessing the heart of the loveliest of duchesses, and the knowledge that for his sake she was guilty of secret folly. The pride of the lover had inspired the poet. So the duchess had kept these stirring letters, as old men sometimes keep indecent pictures, because of the extravagant praise they contained of such qualities of hers as were least worthy of a duchess.

—"And he died in a shameful prison!" said she, clutching her letters in alarm, as she heard her maid tap softly at the door.

—"Madame Camusot has come to see you on a most important matter that interests you," the maid announced.

Diane sprang up in terror.

—"Oh!" said she as she saw Amélie, who assumed an expression of suitable gravity. "I know what you have come for! You want my letters—Ah! my letters—my letters!"—

She sank back upon a sofa, remembering that, in the madness of her passion, she had answered Lucien in his own tone, that she had written him as enthusiastically of his charms as he had of hers, and in what romantic strains!

—"It is too true, madam," answered Madame Camusot; "I have come to save more than your life, for your honor is at stake.—Collect yourself and dress; we must go to the Duchess de Grandlieu, for, happily for you, you are not the only woman compromised."

—"But I am told that Léontine burned all the letters poor Lucien left at the Palais yesterday."

"But Lucien had a double in Jacques Collin, madame," cried the judge's wife. "You forget that pernicious intimacy which was certainly the sole cause of the death of the charming young man whom we regret so deeply. That Machiavelli of the galleys never lost his head in his life, and M. Camusot is sure that the monster has put in a place of safety the most compromising among the love-letters received by his—"

—"His friend," said the duchess, quickly. "You are right, my dear; we must go and hold council with the Grandlieus. We are all involved in this matter, and fortunately Sérizy will lend us a helping hand."

—The extremity of danger has, as we have just seen in the scenes at the Conciergerie, as terrific a power over the soul as that of the strongest reagents over the body. It is a moral Voltaic battery, and perhaps the day is not far distant when it will be discovered by what method feeling is chemically condensed into a fluid, somewhat similar to electricity.

The same phenomenon took place with the duchess as with the convict. This weak, exhausted woman, who had not slept all night; this duchess who usually spent so much time at her toilet, was suddenly possessed of the strength of a lioness at bay, and the presence of mind of a general under fire. Diane selected her garments herself, and dressed as rapidly as a grisette, who is her own tiringwoman. The change was so remarkable that her maid stood motionless with astonishment staring at her mistress, who was clad in her chemise, pleased, perhaps, to have the judge's wife see, through its transparent veil of linen, her body, that, white and perfect as Canova's Venus, was like a jewel glittering through the delicate paper that envelops it. It suddenly occurred to Diane to put on a comfortable pair of stays that hooked together in front, and spared her the time and trouble necessary for lacing them. After she had arranged the lace ruffles of her chemise and laid them systematically in place, her maid brought her petticoat to her and finally her dress. Then the woman signed to Amélie to fasten the duchess dress in

the back, while she ran to fetch a pair of Scotch thread stockings, and velvet shoes, a shawl and a hat. Amélie and the maid together put on the duchess' shoes and stockings.

—"You are the most beautiful woman I ever saw," said Amélie, adroitly, as with a sudden movement she bent down and kissed Diane's beautiful and polished knee.

—"Madame has not her equal," said the maid.

—"Come Josette, be quiet," rejoined the duchess.—"Have you a carriage?" she asked of Madame Camusot. "Come, my dear, we can talk on the way."

The duchess ran down the great stairway of the Hôtel de Cadignan, drawing on her gloves as she went, a sight that had never been seen before.

—"To the Hôtel de Grandlieu, and very quickly!" said she to one of her servants to whom she beckoned to mount behind the carriage.

The man hesitated, for the vehicle was nothing but a hack.

—"Ah! Madame, you never told me the young man had letters from you! If you had let me know that, Camusot would have proceeded very differently."—

—"Léontine's condition absorbed me so completely that I quite forgot about it," answered the duchess. "The poor thing was already half crazed the day before yesterday, so you may imagine what a shock she received from this fatal event! Oh! if you only knew, my dear, what a morning

we had yesterday.—It is enough to make me forswear love forever. Yesterday, Léontine and I were dragged by a hideous hag, an old clothes-dealer, who was a clever enough woman though, into that evil-smelling, blood-stained den they call a place of justice. On our way to the Palais, I said to her: 'I should like to kneel down and pray, like Madame de Nucingen, in a bad storm she met with on the Mediterranean, on a voyage to Naples:' "My God! save me this time, and I won't ask it again." These are two days that I shall never forget! How stupid it is to write!—But when a woman is in love and receives letters that burn through her eyes into her heart, she catches fire, loses sight of prudence and answers them."—

—"Why should she write, when she can act?" asked Madame Camusot.

—"It is so glorious to love!"—cried the duchess proudly. "It is the soul's joy."

—"A beautiful woman," returned Madame Camusot, modestly, "is excusable, for she has so many more temptations than the rest of us."

The duchess smiled.

"I have been much too generous," she said. "In the future, I mean to do like that abominable Madame d'Espard."

"What does she do?" asked the judge's wife, curiously.

—"She has written a thousand love-letters.—"

"As many as that?"—cried Madame Camusot, interrupting her.

—"Yes, and I can assure you, my dear, that you could not find a compromising sentence in one of them."—

"You are incapable of being so cold and circumspect," replied Madame Camusot. "You are one of those lovely women who can never resist the devil—"

—"I have vowed that I shall never write again. In all my life I have never written to anybody but poor Lucien.—I shall keep his letters till I die. They burn with passion, my dear child, and sometimes I need—"

—"Suppose they were found?" said Madame Camusot, with a timid little gesture.

—"Oh! I shall say they are part of a novel I began; for I have copied them all, my dear, and burnt the originals."

—"Oh! Let me read them for my reward, madame!"—

—"Perhaps," said the duchess. "Then you can see, my dear, that he wrote quite differently to Léontine!"

These last words revealed the nature of a true woman—the woman of all times and countries.

Like the frog in la Fontaine's fable, Madame Camusot was bursting with pleasure at calling upon the Grandlieus in company with the beautiful Diane de Maufrigneuse. She was, this morning, to establish a connection that was necessary to her ambition, and would hear herself addressed as "Madame la Présidente." She felt the ineffable

joy of triumphing over great obstacles, the principal one of which was the incapacity of her husband, a fact of which she was fully aware, although the world had not as yet found it out. To make an inferior man succeed gives women as well as kings the same kind of pleasure that actors feel in playing a poor piece for the hundredth time. It is the very ecstacy of egotism, the saturnalia of power. Power understands its own extent, only by the anomaly of crowning a nonentity with the palm of success, and insulting genius, which is sole force outside the reach of absolute power. The imperial farce of the promotion of Caligula's horse has had, and will always have, many representations.

In a few minutes' time, Diane and Amélie had passed from the elegant disorder of Diane's bedroom to the severe luxury and grandeur of the Hôtel de Grandlieu.

The Duchess de Grandlieu, who was a Portuguese, and very pious, rose every morning, at eight o'clock, to hear mass in the little Church of Sainte Valère, a chapel of Saint Thomas d'Aquinas, then standing on the esplanade of the Invalides. The chapel has been torn down since then, and the congregation has removed to the rue de Bourgogne, pending the building of a Gothic church, which is to be dedicated to Sainte Clotilde.

After the Duchess de Grandlieu had heard the first words that Diane de Maufrigneuse whispered in her ear, the pious Duchess de Grandlieu went in search of M. de Grandlieu, whom she brought back

with her. The duke took in Madame Camusot with the rapid glance which a man of rank can probe the life and even the soul of a stranger. Amélie's dress, also, helped him largely to guess the middle-class existence she had led from Alençon to Mantes, and from Mantes to Paris.

Ah! if the judge's wife had known this ducal gift, she could not have borne so graciously the polite irony of his gaze. As it was, she only saw the politeness of it; ignorance sometimes shares the privileges of knowledge.

—"This is Madame Camusot, the daughter of Thirion, one of the cabinet ushers," said the duchess to her husband.

The duke bowed *very* politely to the judge's wife, and his face relaxed somewhat its serious expression. He rang for his valet, who immediately presented himself.

—"Take a carriage, and go to the rue Honoré-Chevalier," said the duke. "On reaching there, ring the bell at a small door, number 10. Tell the servant who opens the door that I wish to see his master at once; and bring the gentleman back with you, if he is at home. Use my name, which will prevent your having any trouble, and try to return within fifteen minutes."

As soon as the man had gone, the duchess' valet appeared at the door.

—"Go to the Duc de Chaulieu, and send in this card," said the duke. He gave the valet a card that was turned down in a peculiar manner. When

either duke wished to see the other immediately on urgent and mysterious business that did not admit of writing, he notified his friend in this way.

All classes of society have the same customs, which differ only in manner, fashion and degree. The great world has its slang, too, only its slang is known as *style.*

—"Are you very sure of the existence of the letters said to be written by Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu to this young man?" asked the duke of Madame Camusot. He sounded her with a look, as a sailor sounds the sea.

—"I have not seen them, but I fear they exist," she answered, trembling.

—"My daughter can never have written anything she would be ashamed to confess!" cried the duchess.

—"Poor duchess!" thought Diane, looking at the duke in a way that made him shudder.

—"What do you think, dear little Diane?" whispered the duke in Diane's ear, drawing her into the embrasure of a window.

—"Clotilde was so crazy about Lucien, my dear, that she made an appointment with him, before she left. If it had not been for the little Lenoncourt, she might have run away with him in the forest of Fontainebleau. I know that Lucien wrote Clotilde letters that were enough to turn the head of a saint. We are three daughters of Eve enveloped in the coils of the serpent of correspondence."—

The duke and Diane returned from the embrasure

of the window and rejoined the duchess and Madame Camusot, who were talking together in a low tone. Amélie had followed the advice of the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, and was posing as a very pious person, in order to make a good impression upon the haughty Portuguese lady.

—"We are at the mercy of a vile convict!" said the duke, shrugging his shoulders. "That is what comes of receiving people whom you are not quite sure of! Before admitting anybody, you should know all about his family, his fortune, and all his antecedents."—

This phrase of his gives a moral to the tale, from an aristocratic point of view.

—"It can't be undone, now," said the Duchess de Maufrigneuse. "We must devote all our energies to saving poor Madame de Sérizy, Clotilde and myself."—

—"We must wait for Henri, whom I have sent for, and everything depends upon the person whom Gentil has gone in search of. Heaven grant that he is in Paris!—Madame," he added, addressing Madame Camusot, "I thank you for the interest you have shown us."—

This was the signal for Madame Camusot to take her leave. The daughter of the cabinet usher was wise enough to understand the duke and rose to go; but the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, with the enchanting grace that won for her the good-will and affection of all who knew her, took Amélie by the hand in a way to call the attention of the duke and duchess.

"For my own sake," said she, "and not because she has been up since the dawn to try to save us all, I ask you to give more than a passing thought to dear Madame Camusot. In the first place, she has already obliged me in a way that I shall never forget; and then, she and her husband are absolutely devoted to our interests. I have promised her that Camusot shall be advanced, and I entreat you to use all your influence for him, to please me."

—"You had no need of this recommendation," said the duke to Madame Camusot. "The Grandlieus are not accustomed to forget the services that have been rendered them. The king's adherents will soon have an opportunity of distinguishing themselves and showing their devotion to him. Your husband shall be put in the breach."—

Madame Camusot withdrew, puffed up with pride and pleasure. She went home full of triumphant admiration for herself, and thought that she could now make light of the attorney-general's enmity.

—"If we could but make M. de Granville lose his place!" thought she.

She had left the Hôtel Grandlieu only just in time, for the Duc de Chaulieu, one of the king's favorites, encountered her on the steps, on her way out.

—"Henri!" cried the Duc de Grandlieu, as his friend was announced; "do go to the château and try to get audience of the king. I will tell you why."

He drew the duke toward the same window

where he had lately talked with the gay and gracious Diane.

From time to time the Duc de Chaulieu threw stolen glances at the volatile duchess, who returned them in spite of a sermon which she was evidently receiving from the pious Duchess de Grandlieu.

"My dear girl," said the Duc de Grandlieu, at last, when his private interview was at an end, "you must try to be wiser in future. You must be more careful about appearances," he added, taking Diane's hands in his, "and don't commit yourself again. Never write, for letters, my dear, have caused as many private as public calamities.—What is excusable in a young girl like Clotilde, who is in love for the first time, cannot be forgiven in a—"

—"In an old grenadier who has smelt powder!" said Diane, making the duke a pretty little grimace.

Her jest and her droll expression brought a smile to the troubled faces of the two dukes, and even to the lips of the pious duchess herself.

—"It is four years since I have written a love-letter!—Are we safe now?" asked Diane, hiding her anxiety under her assumed playfulness.

—"Not yet!" said the Duc de Chaulieu, "for you don't know how hard it is to commit an arbitrary act. For a constitutional king it is as difficult of performance as infidelity is to a married woman. It is his adultery."

"His darling sin!" rejoined the Duc de Grandlieu.

"Forbidden fruit!" cried Diane, with a smile.

"Oh! how I should like to be the government; for I have no more fruit, myself; I've eaten it all up."

"Oh! my dear, dear child!" said the pious duchess, "you are going too far."

Just then the noise of a carriage driving up to the door at full galop was heard. The two gentlemen bowed, and leaving the ladies alone together, went to the Duc de Grandlieu's study, where they were to receive the gentleman from the rue Honoré-Chevalier. This was no other than the obscure, but powerful Corentin, the chief of the counter-police of the château, that is, of the political police.

"Walk in," said the Duc de Grandlieu, "walk in, Monsieur de Saint Denis."

Corentin, who was surprised to find the duke had so good a memory, bowed profoundly to the two gentlemen, and walked in before them.

—"We have sent for you, my dear sir, on account of the same person, or rather on a matter relating to him," observed the Duc de Grandlieu.

—"But he is dead," said Corentin.

—"He has a comrade who is still alive, however," returned the Duc de Chaulieu, "and a formidable fellow, too."

—"The convict Jacques Collin!" replied Corentin.

—"Tell him, Ferdinand," said the Duc de Chaulieu to the old ambassador.

—"The miscreant is to be dreaded," resumed the Duc de Grandlieu, "for, in the hope of ransom he has possessed himself of certain letters, written

by Madame de Sérizy and Madame de Maufrigneuse to his creature, Lucien Chardon. It seems the young man made a system of getting passionate letters from ladies, in exchange for his; for it is supposed that Mademoiselle de Grandlieu wrote him some, or at least we fear so; but we cannot be sure about it, as she is abroad."—

—"That silly young fellow," replied Corentin, "was incapable of any such premeditated scheme!—It is a precaution of the Abbé Carlos Herrera!"

Corentin leaned his elbow on the arm of his chair, and dropping his head in his hand, sat lost in thought.

"Money!"—said he. "The man has more than we. He used Esther Gobseck as a bait to fish nearly two millions out of that golden lake, Nucingen.—Gentlemen, let me have full authority from whomever has the right to give it, and I will rid you of this man!"—

—"And—how about the letters?" asked the Duc de Grandlieu.

—"Listen, gentlemen!" returned Corentin, jumping up, his face convulsed with excitement.

He thrust his hands in the pockets of his black cloth breeches. This great actor in the historical drama of our time still wore his morning trousers, for he had not stopped to change them on being summoned, and had merely put on another coat and waistcoat, as he was well aware how thankful great people can be for promptness on certain occasions.

He walked familiarly up and down the room, discussing the matter aloud to himself, as if he were alone.

—"He is a convict!" he said; "we might shut him up without a trial in solitary confinement at Bicêtre, and leave him to die there, with no possibility of communicating with the outside world.—But he may have foreseen such a proceeding and given instructions in consequence to his friends!"

—"He was put in solitary confinement at once," interrupted the Duc de Grandlieu, "after he was arrested so unexpectedly in the house of that woman."

"It isn't possible to keep a rascal like him shut up by himself," answered Corentin. "He has as many resources as—I have." The two dukes exchanged a glance that showed their perplexity.

—"We might send him back to the galleys at once," Corentin went on; "at Rochefort he would be a dead man in six months. Oh! without any interference on our part," he added, in reply to a gesture from the Duc de Grandlieu. "It could not be otherwise; a convict can't live more than six months in the heat of summer, when he is set to hard labor in the unhealthy district of the Charente. Still, this would be of use only in case our man has taken no precautions about the letters. If the wretch mistrusted his enemies, as is probable, we must discover what his precautions are. If the person who holds the letters is poor, he can be

bribed—so we must try to get Jacques Collin to tell his secrets. What a piece of work that would be! I should never succeed! It would be a better plan to buy the letters from him with other letters—letters of pardon, and take him into my service. Jacques Collin is the only man capable of succeeding me, now that poor Contenson and Peyrade are dead. It seems as if Jacques Collin had killed those two incomparable detectives to make a place for himself. You see, gentlemen, you must give me full authority. I am going to see M. de Granville at his office. Send some trustworthy person to meet me there, for I need a letter of introduction to M. de Granville, who does not know me; —I will give the letter, besides, to the president of the council; —or else I need somebody of imposing appearance to introduce me.—You have half an hour, for that is about the time I shall require to dress myself, that is, to put myself in the proper trim for presenting myself to the attorney-general."

—"I know your consummate skill, sir," said the Duc de Chaulieu, "and I only ask you to answer me yes or no. Can you assure us of your success?" —

—"Yes, if you allow me full powers, and give me your word to ask no questions. My plan is made up."

The two gentleman shuddered slightly at this sinister reply.

—"Very well, sir!" said the Duc de Chaulieu,

"please put down your expenses in this matter in the usual account."

Corentin bowed, and left the room.

Henri de Lenoncourt, for whom Ferdinand de Grandlieu ordered a carriage, drove at once to the king, whom the privileges of his office allowed him to see at all times.

*

Thus the various interests of the highest and lowest, inextricably tangled, were brought by necessity to meet together in the office of the attorney-general. They were represented by three men: the law by M. de Granville, the family by Corentin, and social evil in all its savage energy by the terrible Jacques Collin.

This was a struggle in which the forces of justice and despotism were marshalled together against the cunning of the galleys, the galleys, that typify the daring that annihilates calculation and reflection; that never hesitates about its means, and, free from the hypocrisy of arbitrary power, is the hideous symbol of the cravings of a hungry stomach, the hasty, red-handed protest of starvation. Were not assault and self-protection represented here, robbery and property? The terrible question of the social state and the natural state was to be decided within the narrowest limits. In short it was the terrible, living image of an anti-social compromise, made with a savage mob by the feeble ministers of justice.

When M. Camusot was announced to the attorney-general, the latter made a sign to have him shown in. M. de Granville, who had been expecting this visit, was desirous of coming to an understanding with the judge on the best manner of

ending the case in which Lucien had been the central figure. The conclusion could no longer be what he and Camusot had planned the evening before the poor young poet's death.

—"Sit down, Monsieur Camusot," said M. de Granville, sinking back in his chair.

When they were left alone together, M. de Granville allowed the despondency which he felt to become apparent. Camusot looked at him and saw that his face was pale, almost livid, and that it wore an expression of extreme weariness, a total prostration that spoke of sufferings perhaps more cruel than those of the condemned prisoner to whom the clerk of the court had announced the rejection of his appeal for mercy. And yet, in the administration of justice, that rejection meant: "Prepare to die, for your hour has come."

—"I will come back, later, sir," said Camusot, "although my business is pressing."—

—"Stay," answered the attorney-general, with dignity. "A true magistrate, sir, should accept his troubles, and try to hide them. I have done wrong to allow you to see that I am disturbed."—

Camusot made a deprecating gesture.

"God grant that you may never know the extreme hardships of our life," M. de Granville went on. "It is almost more than I can bear! I have been spending the night at the house of one of my friends; I have but two intimate friends, the Count Octave de Bauvan, and the Count de Sérizy. From six o'clock in the evening to six o'clock this

morning, M. de Sérizy, Count Octave and I took turns in watching beside Madame de Sérizy's bed, and every time we were in terror lest we should find her dead or hopelessly insane. Desplein, Bianchon, Sinard and the two nurses never left the room. The count adores his wife, so you may imagine the night I spent between a woman crazed with love and a man crazed with despair. A statesman does not show his despair as a fool does. Sérizy sat as calm as if he were at a council of state, writhing in his chair in his efforts to maintain a serene expression.—The sweat stood out in drops upon his forehead, that forehead bent by so much toil! I was overcome with fatigue and slept from five to half-past seven; at eight o'clock I was obliged to be here to give the order for an execution. You may believe me, Monsieur Camusot, when a man has spent the night in the depths of anguish, and has felt God's hand pressing heavily on human life, and wounding noble hearts, it is very hard for him to sit at his desk, and say coldly: 'Take off a man's head at four o'clock! Kill one of God's creatures, who is full of life and strength and health!' And yet it is my duty to say it!—Worst sorrow of all, I must give the order for raising a scaffold.—

"The condemned prisoner does not know that his judge suffers an agony of mind that equals his. At present we are bound each to each by a sheet of paper, I, as avenging society, and he, as the crime to be expiated, we are a type of a two-sided duty, two existences that are united for a moment by the

sword of the law. Who can pity or console the magistrate's profound distress?—It is our pride to bury it deep in our hearts. The priest, who has offered his life a sacrifice to God, and the soldier who is ready to die a thousand deaths for his country, seem to me happier than the magistrate, with his doubts, his fears, and his terrible responsibility."

"Do you know who the prisoner is, who is to be executed to-day?" the attorney-general continued. "A young man of twenty-seven, handsome as the boy who died yesterday, and with fair hair like his. His head will fall contrary to our expectations, for there was no evidence against him, save that he was in possession of stolen goods. He has avowed nothing since his conviction, and for seventy days has resisted all our efforts to obtain a confession, insisting that he was innocent. In these two months I have two deaths on my shoulders. Oh! I would gladly give a year of my life to make him confess, for the jury cannot be satisfied without his confession.—Think what a blow to the law, if it be hereafter discovered that the crime for which he is to die was committed by another.

"The importance of every event is exaggerated in Paris, and the slightest incident of the law-courts assumes a political character.

"The jury, which the revolutionary legislators thought so effective an institution, is an element of social ruin; it has failed in its mission of protecting society and plays with its functions. Jurors are divided into two parties, one of which is

averse to capital punishment, and the result of this is the total overthrow of equality before the law. The horrible crime of parricide may obtain the verdict of not guilty in one department, while in another a comparatively slight crime is punished with death! How would it be, if, in Paris, our own jurisdiction, an innocent man were executed.*

—"He is an escaped convict," timidly observed M. Camusot.

"He would become a paschal lamb in the hands of the opposition and the press!" exclaimed M. de Granville. "And the opposition would have a fair opportunity for whitewashing him, for he is a fanatical Corsican, full of the ideas of his country, and his crimes are attributable to the *vendetta*. —In Corsica, a man may kill his enemy, and yet still be a respectable person in his own consideration and in that of others."—"Ah! Right-minded magistrates are much to be pitied. They should live apart from society like the priestly caste of old, and should never be seen by the world except at fixed hours, issuing from their cells, grave, old and venerable, to sit in judgment after the manner of those ancient high priests, who united in themselves the judicial power and the sacerdotal power. Then we should be seen only upon our thrones; but, as it is, we are seen sad or gay like the rest of the world! We are seen in the drawing-room, in our own families, with the same passions as other

*At the present day, 1843, there are in the galleys *twenty-three* PARRICIDES, who have been allowed the benefit of *extenuating circumstances*.

citizens, and we run the risk of appearing grotesque instead of terrible."—

This cry of anguish, interrupted, as it was, by pauses and exclamations, and accompanied by gestures that lent it an eloquence not to be transferred to paper, made Camusot shudder.

—"Sir," began Camusot, "I, too, began yesterday the apprenticeship in suffering of my profession.—The death of that young man was almost the end of me; the poor fellow did not understand my partiality toward him, and killed himself."—

"You ought not to have examined him," cried M. de Granville. "It would have been so easy to help him by abstaining from questions."—

—"And how about the law?" replied Camusot; "it was already two days since his arrest."—

—"The harm is done now," resumed the attorney-general. "I have done my best to repair what indeed is irreparable; I sent my carriage and servants to the poor, weak poet's funeral. Sérizy followed my example; furthermore, he accepts the trust bequeathed him by the luckless young man, and consents to be his executor. When he made this promise, he could see a sign of intelligence in his wife's eyes; and finally, Count Octave went to the funeral in person."

—"Now, sir," said Camusot, "let us arrange for the matter in hand. There still remains a very dangerous prisoner, who is, as you must know, Jacques Collin. The wretch will be recognized for what he is—"

"Then we are lost!" cried M. de Granville.

"He is at this present moment with the condemned man, whom he took under his protection at the galleys just as he took Lucien under his protection here in Paris.—

"Bibi Lupin is disguised as a gendarme in order to be present at the interview."

"Why does the detective-police interfere?" asked the attorney-general. "It should act only under my orders!"—

"All the Conciergerie will know that we have got Jacques Collin.—Now I have come to tell you that this great and daring criminal is supposed to have in his possession some very dangerous letters written by Madame de Sérizy, the Duchess de Maufrigneuse, and Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu."

"Are you certain of it?"—demanded M. de Granville, his face full of pained surprise.

"You may decide, sir, if I have cause to fear it. When I untied the bundle of letters seized among Lucien's papers, I saw Jacques Collin look at them keenly with a satisfied smile, the meaning of which could not escape an examining judge. As clever a rascal as Jacques Collin takes good care not to let go a weapon that is so useful to him. Imagine these documents in the hands of his counsel, whom the rogue is sure to choose among the enemies of the government and the aristocracy! My wife, to whom the Duchess de Maufrigneuse has been very kind, went to warn her this morning, and, at the

present moment, they must be holding a council of war at the Grandlieu's."—

"We can never try the man!" cried the attorney-general, springing up and striding through the office. "He has certainly placed the letters in safe keeping."—

"I know where," said Camusot.

These words entirely did away with the prejudice the attorney-general had conceived against the judge.

"Tell me all you know,"—said M. de Granville, sitting down again.

"On my way to the Palais, this morning, I thought over the whole distressing affair carefully. Jacques Collin has an aunt, a real aunt, not a fictitious one, a woman whom the political police has already called to the attention of the prefecture. He is her pupil and idol, and she is his father's sister, Jacqueline Collin by name. The woman has set up an old clothes shop, and by aid of the privileges of her trade, she has been able to learn many family secrets. If Jacques Collin gave the papers that are so important for him into anybody's trust, it must have been into hers. Let us arrest her—"

The attorney-general glanced shrewdly at Camusot, in a way that said: "The man is not such a fool as I took him for yesterday; but he is young still and has not yet learned to hold the reins of the law."

"But," continued Camusot, "to succeed we must change all the measures we adopted yesterday,

and I have come here to get your advice and your orders."—

The attorney-general took up his paper-cutter and tapped softly on the edge of the table, with a gesture natural to a man who is absorbed in thought.

"Three noble families in peril!" cried he. "We must be careful not to make a blunder! You are right; let us follow Fouché's maxim: *Arrest him!* Jacques Collin must be instantly put back into solitary confinement."

"We should then be admitting him to be a convict, and that would be incriminating to Lucien's memory."—

"What a dreadful business this is," said M. de Granville; "no plan is safe."

Just then the warden of the Conciergerie knocked and entered; the attorney-general's office is always so well guarded that persons belonging to the court can alone reach the door.

"Sir," said M. Gault, "the prisoner known as Carlos Herrera desires to speak with you."

"Has he had communication with anybody?" asked the attorney-general.

"With the prisoners, for he has been in the prison-yard since about half-past seven. He has seen the condemned man, who seems to have *talked* with him."

At a few words from M. Camusot, M. de Granville understood in a flash what material aid toward the recovery of the letters would be afforded by obtaining an avowal of Jacques Collin's intimacy

with Théodore Calvi. He was happy to have an excuse for delaying the execution, and beckoned to M. Gault to come to him.

"It is my intention," said he, "to put off the execution till to-morrow, but I don't wish them to know anything of it at the Conciergerie. You must keep absolute silence, and the executioner must appear to be superintending his preparations. Send the Spanish priest here under sufficient guard; the Spanish embassy has claimed him. Let the gendarmes bring him by your private staircase, so that he may see no one, and let a man hold him on either side, and not let him go till he reaches my office. Are you quite sure, Monsieur Gault, that this dangerous foreigner has had no communication with anybody outside the prison?"

"Ah! just as he was leaving the cell of the condemned man, a lady came to see him."—

At this the two magistrates exchanged a meaning look.

"What lady?" asked Camusot.

"One of his penitents—a marchioness," answered M. Gault.

"Worse and worse!" cried M. de Granville, turning to Camusot.

"She took away the breath of the gendarmes and gaoler," resumed M. Gault.

"You should neglect no part of your duty," said the attorney-general, severely. "The Conciergerie is not walled in for nothing. How did the woman enter?"

"With the usual permit, sir," replied the warden. "The lady came very well-dressed, in a handsome carriage, with a mounted groom and a footman, and asked to see her confessor, as she was on her way to the funeral of the unfortunate young man, whose body you had sent away."—

"Bring me the permit from the prefecture," said M. de Granville.

"It was granted on the recommendation of His Excellency, Count Sérizy.

"What kind of a woman was she?" asked the attorney-general.

"We thought she looked like a lady."

"Did you see her face?"

"She wore a black veil."

"What did they say?"

"She was a pious person with a prayer-book;—what could she say?—She asked the abbé's blessing, and knelt down."—

"Did they have a long conversation?" asked the judge.

"Not five minutes; but none of us could understand what they said, and we thought they were speaking Spanish."

"Tell us everything," continued the attorney-general. "I repeat that the slightest detail is of vital importance for us. Let this be an example to you."

"She was crying, sir."

"Was she really crying?"

"We could not see, as she hid her face in her

handkerchief. She left three hundred francs in gold for the prisoners."

"It can't be she!" cried Camusot.

"When Bibi Lupin heard about it," resumed M. Gault, "he said she was a thief."

"He knows what he is talking about," said M. de Granville. —"Send out your warrant," he added to Camusot, "and make haste to put the seals on everything in her house.—But how could she obtain a recommendation from M. de Sérizy?—Bring me the permit from the prefecture—go Monsieur Gault and send me the abbé at once. The danger will be held in check as long as he is with us, and in two hours' conversation a man can see a great way into another man's mind."

"Especially an attorney-general like yourself," put in Camusot artfully.

"You will be with me," returned the attorney-general politely, who then relapsed into his meditations.

"In every prison parlor there ought to be a superintendent of visitors, who should receive a good salary, and be chosen from the cleverest and most devoted of the police agents," said he, after a long pause. "Bibi Lupin might end his days in that prison, and we should have eyes and ears in a place which requires more careful watching than it receives at present. M. Gault could not tell us anything decisive."

"He is so busy," said Camusot; "but, between the prison cells and ourselves there is a great

gap which ought not to exist. When a prisoner is brought from the Conciergerie to one of our offices, he has to pass through corridors, courtyards and stairways. Our agents are not always attentive enough, whereas the prisoner is constantly on the alert."

"They tell me a woman presented herself in Jacques Collin's way when he was taken from his cell to his examination. She got in as far as the place where the gendarmes are stationed, at the head of the staircase leading from the Souricière, the ushers told me. I scolded the gendarmes well for it."

"Oh! the palace ought to be entirely rebuilt," said M. de Granville; "but it would require an outlay of twenty or thirty millions.—Fancy asking the Chambers for thirty millions for the convenience of the law!"

The steps of several persons and the sound of arms were heard without. Jacques Collin was evidently approaching.

The attorney-general assumed an expression of profound gravity,—under which was hidden his true self—and Camusot followed his example. Gault left the room.

*

The office boy opened the door, and Jacques Collin appeared calm and composed.

"You wished to see me," said the magistrate. "I will hear what you have to say."

"Sir, I am Jacques Collin; I surrender myself to you!"

Camusot shuddered, but the attorney-general remained unmoved.

"You must suppose me to have some motive for my present action," Jacques Collin went on with a sneering look that embraced both magistrates, "I am giving you a great deal of trouble, for, if I were only a Spanish priest, you would send me with a company of gendarmes to the frontier of Bayonne, and there the Spanish bayonets would rid you of me."

The two judges remained silent and impassive.

"Sir," continued the convict, "I have reasons still more serious than these, though they are devilishly personal; but I can tell them only to you.—If you were afraid —"

"Afraid of whom, of what?" asked the Count de Granville.

His attitude and gesture, the carriage of his head, his face, his look, all transformed this great attorney into the living image of magistracy, whose duty it is to offer the noblest example of civil courage. For a fleeting moment, he rose to the level of the

magistrates of the ancient parliament, in the times of civil war, when the presidents stood face to face with death, and remained as immovable as the statues which have since been erected to their memory.

"Afraid of being alone with an escaped convict," said Jacques Collin.

"Leave us alone, Monsieur Camusot," said the attorney-general, quickly.

"I meant to propose that you should have me bound hand and foot," observed Jacques Collin, coldly fixing his terrible gaze on the two magistrates.

He paused, and then went on gravely:

"Count, I esteemed you before, but now I admire you."—

"Do you think yourself so formidable?" demanded the magistrate, disdainfully.

"*Think* myself formidable?" said the convict; "what good would that do? I *am* formidable, and I know it!"

Jacques Collin took a chair and sat down with the ease of a man who knows himself on his adversary's level, in a conference in which one power treats with another on equal terms.

Just then, M. Camusot, who was outside the threshold of the door which he was about to close, re-entered the room and returned to M. de Granville, to whom he handed two folded papers.

"Look," said he, drawing the attorney-general's attention to one of the papers.

"Call back M. Gault," cried the Count de

Granville, as he read the name of the maid of Madame de Maufrigneuse, who was known to him.

The director of the Conciergerie returned.

"Describe the woman who came to see the prisoner," said the attorney-general in his ear.

"She was short, broad, stout and thickset," answered M. Gault.

"The person to whom the permit was granted, is tall and slender," said M. de Granville. "About what age was she?"

"About sixty."

"This has something to do with me, gentlemen, hasn't it?" said Jacques Collin. "Come," he went on good-naturedly, "don't look any farther; the woman is my aunt, a real aunt, and old. I can spare you a great deal of trouble.—You cannot find my aunt, unless I am willing.—If we beat about the bush in this way, we shall never get any further."

"He doesn't speak French with a Spanish accent any more; he can talk plainly enough now," said M. Gault.

"Because things are not plain, my dear Monsieur Gault," answered Jacques Collin, with a bitter smile, calling the warden by name.

At that M. Gault rushed to the attorney-general and whispered in his ear:

"Take care, sir; the man is in a fury!"

M. de Granville looked carefully at Jacques Collin and saw that he was outwardly calm, but he soon perceived the truth of what the director had told him. The convict's deceptive attitude hid the cold

and terrible irritation of the nerves of a savage. Volcanic fire was smouldering in his eyes and his hands were clenched; he was like a tiger, crouching to spring upon his prey.

"Leave us," said the attorney-general with a grave air, to the judge and the warden of the Conciergerie.

"You did well to send away Lucien's assassin,"—said Jacques Collin, not caring whether Camusot could hear him or not. "I could bear it no longer; I was going to strangle him."—

M. de Granville shuddered; he had never seen such blood-red eyes, such pale cheeks, such contracted muscles, nor a forehead like Jacques Collin's that dripped with sweat.

"What good would it do for you to commit a murder?" asked the attorney-general, calmly.

"Every day you avenge, or think you avenge, the wrongs of society, sir, and you ask me why I wish for revenge?—Have you never felt the rolling billows of vengeance surge through your veins?—Don't you know that that imbecile judge killed him? For you loved my Lucien and he loved you; I know you by heart, sir. The dear boy told me everything; every night when he came home, I used to put him to bed as a nurse does her child, and made him give me an account of his day.—He confided everything to me, even his most trifling sensations.—Ah! a devoted nurse never loved her only son so tenderly as I loved that angel. If you only knew how good thoughts sprang up in his heart, as flowers spring up in the fields! He was weak, that was his only fault;

weak as the chord of a lyre, that may be so strong when it is stretched.—The weakness of fine natures is the result of their tenderness, their power of admiration and their faculty of expanding in the sunlight of art, of love, and of the beauty that God has given in so many forms to man.—There was something of a woman in Lucien. Ah! why did I not tell the brute beast who has just gone out.—Ah! sir, in my sphere as a prisoner before his judge, I did what God would have done to save His son, if it had been His will, and he had gone with Him before Pilate!"—

A torrent of tears burst from his light yellow eyes, that a moment earlier had flamed like those of a starving wolf after six months of snow in the Ukraine. Then he continued:

"That blockhead would listen to nothing, and he was the cause of Lucien's death.—Ah! sir, I bathed the boy's body with my tears, and prayed to *Him whom I know not*, and who is above us all; I, who do not believe in God,—for, if I were not a materialist, I should not be what I am.—This one word may explain everything. You cannot know, no man, except me can know, what grief is. The fire of my grief dried up my tears last night, and I could not weep, but now I weep, for I feel that you understand me. A little while ago I saw you sitting on the judgment seat.— Ah! sir, may God,—whom I can almost believe in now,—may God preserve you from ever being as I am.—That damned judge has robbed me of my soul. Oh! sir, sir, at this very

moment they are burying my life, my beauty, my virtue, my conscience, and all my strength. Can you think of a dog that has been drained of its life blood by a chemist ?—I am like that dog, and, therefore, I have come to tell you—I am Jacques Collin and give myself up to you.—This was my resolve this morning when they came to tear from me the body that I was kissing as a madman or a mother would, or as the Virgin kissed Jesus at the tomb.—Then I determined to surrender myself to the law, without conditions,—but now I mean to make my terms, and you shall know my reason."—

"Are you speaking to M. de Granville or to the attorney-general," asked the magistrate.

These two men, who represented CRIME and JUSTICE, gazed at each other. The magistrate was profoundly moved by the criminal, and overcome with divine pity for the unfortunate man whose life and feelings he thought he could divine. Moreover, in his capacity as a magistrate—for a magistrate is always a magistrate,—and knowing nothing of Jacques Collin's conduct since his escape, he believed that he could gain the mastery over a criminal, who was, after all, guilty only of forgery. He was anxious to try the effect of generosity upon a nature that was made up of good and evil, as bronze is made up of various metals. Added to this, M. de Granville had reached the age of fifty-three without having ever inspired another with love for him, and like all men who have never been loved he felt great admiration for tender natures. Perhaps this

very disappointment of his, which he shared with those of his fellows who have never secured anything from a woman beyond her esteem and friendship, was the secret of his great intimacy with M. de Bauvan and M. de Sérizy; for a common grief as well as a common joy binds souls together in harmony.

"You have a future!" said the attorney-general, casting a searching glance upon the desponding criminal.

The man made a gesture expressîve of the most profound indifference for all that concerned himself.

"Lucien left a will in which he bequeaths you three hundred thousand francs."—

"Poor, poor boy!" cried Jacques Collin, "he was always *too* honest! I was everything that was bad; he was good, noble, beautiful and sublime. Such a soul as his could not be corrupted; he never took anything from me except my money, sir."

His profound, complete self-abandonment of the personality which the magistrate was unable to revive, proved the truth of his words so entirely that M. de Granville went over to his side. But the attorney-general remained immovable.

"If you no longer take interest in anything," said M. de Granville, "what did you come to say to me?"

"Was it not a great deal for me to give myself up to you? You thought you would catch me, but you would not have succeeded; besides, I should have given you more trouble than you wanted."—

"What an adversary!" thought the attorney-general.

"Sir, you are going to cut off the head of an innocent man, and I have found the real criminal," Jacques Collin went on gravely, as he dried his tears. "I have not come here on their account, but on yours. I have come to save you from remorse, for I care for all those who took any interest in Lucien, just as I shall pursue with my hatred all those who have had a share in his death.—What do you suppose a convict is to me?" he resumed, after a short pause. "He is less to me than an ant is to you. I am like those high-spirited Italian brigands who shoot down any traveler who will bring them more than the cost of a charge of powder. I thought only of you. The young man Calvi confessed to me; he could trust in me because I was once his chain companion. He is very soft-hearted, and thought he could do his mistress a service by undertaking to sell or pawn some stolen goods; but he was no more guilty of the Nanterre crime than you are. He comes from Corsica, where it is the custom for men to take their revenge and kill one another like flies. There is no respect for human life in Italy or Spain, and the reason of it is simple enough, for the people in those countries think they have souls or some image of themselves that will survive and live eternally. Go, and tell such trash to our analysts! It is in the atheistical and philosophical countries that they make men pay dear for attempting to take human life, and they are quite right, since they believe only in matter and in the present. If Calvi had told you the name of the woman who

gave him the stolen property, you would have found, not the real culprit, for he is already within your grasp, but an accomplice that poor Théodore is unwilling to implicate, as she is a woman.— You need not be surprised; every condition of life has its point of honor, and the galleys and the thieves have theirs. Now, I know the murderer of the two women, and the authors of this strange, peculiar and daring crime, and I have heard every detail of it. Put off Calvi's execution, and you shall hear everything; but you must give me your word to commute his sentence and send him back to the galleys.—No man as broken with grief as I am could take the trouble to lie, and you know it. I am telling you the truth."—

"Although it seems like offering an indignity to the law, which should never admit of such compromises, I think I might relax something of the rigor of my office for you, Jacques Collin, and refer this subject to those who have a right to decide upon it."

"Will you grant me his life?"

"Possibly."—

"I ask you to give me your word, sir; that would be enough."

M. de Granville made a gesture of wounded pride.

"I hold in my hand the honor of three noble families, and you hold only three convicts," Jacques Collin continued; "I am stronger than you."

"I might order you back to a dungeon; what would you do then?"—demanded the attorney-general.

"Are you playing a game?" asked Jacques Collin. "I was speaking *quite frankly,* and thought I was talking with M. de Granville; but if it is with the attorney-general I shall take back my cards and not allow you to see my game.—And, if you had only given me your word I should have given you back the letters that Mademoiselle Clothilde de Grandlieu wrote to Lucien."

He said this with a look and accent of deliberation that convinced M. de Granville of the danger of making the least blunder with such an adversary.

"Is that all you ask?" said the attorney-general.

"I am now going to speak to you on my own account," said Jacques Collin. "The honor of the Grandlieu family pays for the commutation of Théodore's sentence, so I am giving a great deal and receiving very little in return. What is a convict condemned to penal servitude for life?—If he escapes you can so easily rid yourself of him; he is a bill of exchange upon the guillotine. But as they might shut him up at Rochefort with the uncharitable purpose of making a speedy end of him, you must promise me to send him to Toulon, with a recommendation to have him well treated. I am going to ask for something more. I have also the letters of Madame de Sérizy and Duchess de Maufrigneuse, and what letters they are!—When women of the streets write they have a good style and fine sentiment, but I tell you, sir, that great ladies, who live fashionably and indulge in fine sentiment all day

long, write as these despised women behave. Philosophers may look for the reason of this contradiction, but I don't care to do so. Woman is an inferior being; she is too much influenced by the weakness of her organization. I never admire her, except in so far as she resembles man. These little ladies of yours have manly brains, and have written masterpieces.—The letters are as fine as the famous ode of Piron, from beginning to end."—

"Really ?"

"Should you like to see them?"—said Jacques Collin, with a smile.

The magistrate felt mortified.

"I can let you read them,"—said Jacques Collin; "but come, no more nonsense! This is a fair game, isn't it?—You promise to return me the letters, and to forbid that the person who brings them shall be watched, followed, or even observed."

"Will it take long ? " asked the attorney-general.

"No; it is now half-past nine,"—answered Jacques Collin, looking at the clock. "Well, in four minutes we shall have a letter of each of these two ladies; after you have read them you will be sure to countermand the guillotine. If it were not so I shouldn't be so calm about it. Moreover, the ladies have been warned."—

M. de Granville made a gesture of surprise.

"They must be already stirring at this time," Jacques Collin went on; "they are going to set the Keeper of the Seals to work, and, who knows, they

may go to the King himself.—Come, do you give me your word to pay no attention to the person who comes here; neither to follow that person yourself, nor, for an hour, to allow anybody to do so?"

"I promise."

"Very well; I know you don't mean to deceive an escaped convict. You are made of the same stuff as Turenne, and will keep your word to a thief.—Now, at this very instant, in the middle of the Salle des pas-Perdus, there is an old ragged beggar-woman. She is probably talking with one of the public writers on the subject of some lawsuit about a party-wall; send your office boy for her, and let him say to her: '*Dabor ti mandana.*' She will come.—But don't be uselessly cruel;—either accept my proposition or *make no compromises with* a criminal—though I beg you to remember that I am only a forger.—Moreover, I entreat you not to leave Calvi in the agonizing anticipation of instant death."—

"The execution has been already countermanded.—And I do not wish," said M. de Granville to Jacques Collin, "that you should be more generous than the justice which I represent."

Jacques Collin looked wonderingly at the attorney-general as he saw him ring the bell.

"You will not try to escape, will you? Give me your word, and that is enough. Go and *bring* the woman."—

The office boy appeared.

"Félix! send away the gendarmes," said M. de Granville.

Jacques Collin was beaten.

In his contest with the magistrate he wished to be the greater, stronger and more generous of the two, and the magistrate had surpassed him. Nevertheless, the convict felt a sense of superiority inasmuch as he was playing a game with the law by making out a guilty man to be innocent, and successfully saving a head from its clutches; but his superiority was dumb, secret and hidden, whereas the *stork* overcame him openly and majestically.

Jacques Collin had no sooner left M. de Granville's office than the Count des Lupeaulx, deputy and secretary-general of the Council, presented himself, in company with a frail old man. The latter was closely wrapped in a dark brown wadded coat, as if it were still winter; his hair was powdered, and his face wan and cold; he walked unsteadily like a man with the gout, leaning on a gold-headed cane. His feet were clad in clumsy calfskin shoes, he carried his hat in his hand and wore in his buttonhole a small pin with seven crosses.

"What is it, my dear des Lupeaulx?" asked the attorney-general.

"The prince has sent me," replied the count in a low voice. "You have full authority for recovering the letters of Madame de Sérizy, Madame de Maufrigneuse and Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu. You can talk it over with this gentleman."—

"Who is he?" whispered the attorney-general.

"I have no secrets from you, attorney-general," answered des Lupeaulx, "he is the famous

Corentin. His Majesty wishes you to report to him all the circumstances of this affair, and the conditions necessary for success."

"Do me the favor," said the attorney-general, "to tell the prince that matters are already settled, and that I do not need this gentleman," he added, alluding to Corentin. "I shall go to receive His Majesty's orders as to the conclusion of this affair, which will require the services of the Keeper of the Seals, as two pardons are to be granted."

"You have acted wisely in going ahead by yourself," said des Lupeaulx, shaking hands with the attorney-general. "The King is determined not to have the peerage and these great families publicly dishonored on the eve of his great enterprise.—It is not simply a low criminal suit, it is an affair of State."

"Tell the prince that all was arranged before you came."

"Really ?"

"I believe so."

"Then, my dear sir, you will be Keeper of the Seals, when the present Keeper is made Chancellor."—

"I have no ambition,"—replied the attorney-general.

Des Lupeaulx went out, laughing.

"Beg the prince to ask the King to give me ten minutes' audience towards half-past two," added M. Granville, as he showed out the Count des Lupeaulx.

"So you are not ambitious!" said des Lupeaulx,

with a shrewd glance at M. de Granville. "Well, you have two children, and, at least you would like to be made a peer of France."—

"If you have those letters, sir, my intervention is useless," observed Corentin, when he was left alone with M. de Granville, who watched him with a curiosity that may be easily understood.

"The services of a man like yourself are never superfluous in an affair so delicate as this," replied the attorney-general, seeing that Corentin had either overheard or guessed everything.

Corentin answered with a little nod that was almost patronizing.

"Do you know, sir, the person in question?" inquired M. de Granville.

"Yes, sir; he is Jacques Collin, the head of the Society of the Ten Thousand, and banker of the three different galleys, a convict, who for five years has been masquerading in the cassock of the Abbé Carlos Herrera. I cannot tell you how he became charged with a mission from the King of Spain to the late King, for none of us have succeeded in fathoming the truth of the matter. I am expecting an answer from Madrid, where I have sent a man with letters. Our convict holds the secrets of two kings."—

"He is a man of immense hardihood. There are only two ways open to us; we must either take him into our service, or rid ourselves of him," said the attorney-general.

"We came to the same conclusion, and that is

a great honor for me," replied Corentin. "I am forced to think so much, and for so many people, that I must expect occasionally to meet a man of sense among them."

This was spoken so dryly and in such a chilling tone of voice that the attorney-general said nothing further, but turned his attention to some pressing matters that he had in hand.

*

It would be impossible to describe Mademoiselle Jacqueline Collin's astonishment when she saw Jacques Collin enter the Salle des pas Perdus. She stood quite still, with her hands on her hips, for she was in the dress of a costermonger. However accustomed she was to her nephew's feats, this exceeded all that had gone before.

"If you stand staring at me as if I were an object in a museum of natural history," said Jacques Collin, taking his aunt by the arm and leading her out of the Salle des pas Perdus, "we shall both be taken for curiosities; they might arrest us, and that would waste time."

They went down the stairway leading from the Galerie Marchande to the rue de la Barillerie.

"Where is Paccard?"

"He is waiting for me near la Rousse's, walking about on the quai aux Fleurs."

"And Prudence?"

"She is living there as my god-daughter."

"Let us go there."—

"Look and see whether we are followed."—

La Rousse, who kept a hardware shop on the quai aux Fleurs, was the widow of a notorious murderer, one of the Ten Thousand. In 1819, after her lover's execution, Jacques Collin had faithfully remitted her twenty odd thousand francs from him.

Trompe-la-Mort was the only person who knew of the intimacy between this young girl, who was then a milliner, and his comrade.

"I am your lover's *boss*," he had said to the young milliner, whom he met by appointment in the Jardin des Plantes at the time when he was a boarder at Madame Vauquer's. "You must have heard him speak of me, my girl. Whoever betrays me dies within the year, but whoever is faithful has nothing to fear from me. I should rather die than say a word that would bring a friend into trouble. You must obey me as a soul does the devil, and you will find it to your advantage. I promised your poor Auguste that I should make you happy; he wanted to make you rich, and came to his death for your sake. Don't cry, but listen to me. Nobody in the world except me knows that you were the mistress of a convict, the murderer who was executed last Saturday, and I shall never tell. You are pretty, and only twenty-two; now that you are in possession of twenty-six thousand francs, you must forget Auguste, marry and set up as an honest woman if you can. In return for all this prosperity I ask you to serve me, and those who come to you from me, without hesitation. I shall never ask anything that might compromise you, your children, your husband, if you have one, or your family. In my profession I often require a safe place in which I can talk to my friends or hide myself. I need a woman I can trust to carry my letters and do my errands. You shall be a letter-box, a porter's lodge, my messenger;

nothing else. Your hair is too light; Auguste and I used to call you la Rousse, and you must keep that name. I shall put you in communication with my aunt, who keeps a shop in the Temple; she is the only person in the world you must obey. Tell her everything that happens; she will see that you get married, and will prove very useful to you."

Thus he concluded his diabolical compact, which was of the same nature as that which had bound Prudence Servien to him for so long a time. Collin never failed to cement the compacts he had made, for like the devil himself he was possessed with the passion of recruiting.

Jacques Collin had married la Rousse to the head clerk of a rich wholesale hardware dealer, towards 1821, and this head clerk, who had bought out his master's business, was now on the high road to prosperity, the father of two children, and assistant mayor of his district. La Rousse, now Madame Prélard, had never had the slightest ground of complaint against Jacques Collin or his aunt, but she trembled from head to foot every time they asked for her services. She now turned deadly pale as she saw these two terrible people enter her shop.

"We have to speak to you on business, madame," said Jacques Collin.

"My husband is at home," said she.

"Very well; we have no special need of you just at present; I never inconvenience anybody unnecessarily."

"Send for a cab, my dear," said Jacqueline

Collin, "and tell my god-daughter to come downstairs. I have found a situation for her as maid to a great lady, whose steward is waiting to take her with him."

Paccard, who looked like a gendarme in civilian's clothes, was talking with M. Prélard concerning an important supply of iron wire for a bridge.

A clerk ran for a cab, and in a few minutes Europe, or to drop the name under which she had served Esther, Prudence Servien, Paccard, Jacques Collin and his aunt got into the vehicle, to the great joy of la Rousse, and Trompe-la-Mort ordered the driver to take them to the Barrière d'Ivry.

Prudence Servien and Paccard trembled before their master like guilty souls in the presence of God.

"Where are the seven hundred and *fifty* thousand francs?" asked Jacques Collin, fixing upon his slaves the clear gaze that chilled the blood of these damned souls when they felt themselves in the wrong, and disconcerted them so thoroughly that their hair stood on end.

"The seven hundred and *thirty* thousand francs," said Jaqueline Collin to her nephew, "are quite safe; I gave them to la Romette this morning in a sealed package."—

"If you had not given them to Jacqueline you would have gone straight *there*,"—said Trompe-la-Mort, pointing to the Place de Grève, in front of which they were passing.

Prudence Servien made a sign of the cross, after

the custom of her country, as if she had seen the lightning strike.

"I forgive you," resumed their master, "on condition that you never commit the same fault again, and that you serve me like these two fingers of my right hand," he added, holding up his first and middle finger; "for this good *moll* here is the thumb!"

He slapped his aunt's back, and went on:

"Listen to me. Henceforward you, Paccard, have nothing to fear, and you can follow your nose wherever you please in *Pantin*. I give you permission to marry Prudence."

Paccard took Jacques Collin's hand and kissed it respectfully.

"What shall I do for you?" he asked.

"Nothing; and you shall have a good income and as many wives as you choose beside your lawful one, for you are quite worthy of the times of the Regency, old fellow.—That's what comes of being too handsome a man!"

Paccard blushed at receiving this ironical compliment from his master.

"But you, Prudence," continued Jacques, "you need a career, a position, a future, and you must remain in my service. Now listen! There is in the rue Sainte Barbe a very good house belonging to Madame de Saint Estève, whose name my aunt borrows occasionally. It is a good business, with an excellent custom that brings in fifteen or twenty thousand francs a year. Madame Saint Estève has the house kept by——"

"La Gonore," said Jacqueline.

"Poor la Pouraille's mistress," put in Paccard. "I took refuge there with Europe the day that our poor mistress, Madame Van Bogseck, died——"

"Do you dare chatter while I am talking?" said Jacques Collin.

There was profound silence in the cab, and Prudence and Paccard did not venture to look at each other.

"The house, then, is kept by la Gonore," Jacques Collin continued. "If you and Prudence went there to hide, I see, Paccard, that you are clever enough to cheat the police, but not clever enough to bamboozle *her*,"—he added, stroking his aunt's chin. "I can guess now how she could find you.—That is all very well; you shall return to la Gonore's.—But to continue: Jacqueline will negotiate with Madame Nourrisson for the purchase of her establishment in the rue Sainte Barbe. You may make your fortune there, if you are well-behaved, my girl!" said he, turning to Prudence. "An abbess at your age; that is worthy of a daughter of France," he concluded, sarcastically.

Prudence threw her arms round Trompe la Mort's neck and kissed him; but with a smart blow that showed his extraordinary strength, he repulsed her so violently that if it had not been for Paccard the girl's head would have broken the cab-window.

"Put down your paws! I don't like such manners," said Trompe la Mort, dryly; "they are disrespectful to me."

"He is right, my girl," said Paccard. "You see it is quite the same as if he gave us a hundred thousand francs. The business is worth that, for the house is on the boulevard, opposite the Gymnase, and we shall get the people on their way out from the theatre."—

"I shall do still more," said Trompe la Mort, "I shall buy the house too."

"We shall be worth millions in six years," cried Paccard.

Weary of so many interruptions, Trompe la Mort gave Paccard a kick in the shin that would have broken the bone if his nerves had not been of india-rubber and his bones of iron.

"No more of that; I'll keep quiet," said Paccard.

"Do you think I am talking nonsense?" continued Trompe la Mort, who had just observed that Paccard had taken a glass too much.

"Listen; in the cellar of the house there are two hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold!"—

Again there was absolute silence in the cab.

"The gold lies under some solid masonry—you must dig it up, and you have but three nights to do it in. Jacqueline will help you—a hundred thousand will be enough to pay for the establishment, fifty thousand for the house, and you may leave the rest."

"Where?" asked Paccard.

"In the cellar?" inquired Prudence.

"Silence!" said Jacqueline.

—"Yes, but we must obtain the consent of the

police for the transference of the business," objected Paccard.

"We shall obtain it," said Trompe-la-Mort dryly. "What are you meddling for ?"—

Jacqueline looked at her nephew, and was struck by the change in his face, beneath the impassive mask under which he habitually hid his emotions.

"My girl," said Jacques Collin to Prudence Servien, "my aunt will give you the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"Seven hundred and thirty thousand," remarked Paccard.

"Well, seven hundred and thirty thousand, then," returned Jacques Collin. "You must go back to-night, under some pretext or other, to Madame Lucien's house. You must climb through the skylight to the roof, and go down the chimney to the bedroom of your late mistress. Then you are to put the package she made of the money into the mattress of her bed."—

"Why not go in by the door ?" asked Prudence Servien.

"The seals are on it, you fool !" replied Jacques Collin. "The inventory will be taken in a few days, and then it will appear that you are innocent of the theft."—

"Long live the *boss !*" cried Paccard. "How good you are to us !"

"Stop, driver !" called Jacques Collin in his powerful voice.

The carriage stopped opposite the cab stand of the Jardin des Plantes.

"Now, off with you, my children," said Jacques Collin, "and be careful not to blunder. Go to the pont des Arts this afternoon at five o'clock, and my aunt will tell you if there is any counter order.—We must foresee all contingencies," he added, in a low voice to his aunt.—"Jacqueline will explain to you to-morrow," he resumed aloud, "your safest plan for digging up the gold from the *deep*. It is a ticklish job."—

Prudence and Paccard jumped out on the pavement, happy as released prisoners.

"What a wonderful man the *boss* is!" exclaimed Paccard.

"He would be the king of men if he were not so scornful to women."

"Ah! he is very good!" exclaimed Paccard. "Did you see the kicks he gave? We deserve to be sent to *our fathers*, for, after all, it was we who got him into trouble."

"I only hope," said the shrewder Prudence, "that he does not mean to implicate us in any crime in order to send us to *the field*."

"He? If the fancy took him he would tell us. You don't know him!—What a pretty career he has marked out for you! We shall be respectable citizens; what luck! When that man is fond of you, he hasn't his match for kindness."—

"Now, my puss," said Jacques Collin to his aunt, "you must take care of la Gonore and see that she is put to sleep. In five days time she will be

arrested, and there will be found in her room the one hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold that remain from another share of the proceeds of the murder of the old Crottats, father and mother of the notary."

"She will get five years in the Madelonettes," said Jacqueline.

"About that," rejoined Jacques Collin. "So that will be a reason for Madame Nourrisson to get rid of her house; she cannot carry it on herself, and it isn't easy to find the right kind of a manager. You can arrange this without trouble. We shall have an *eye* there.—But these three operations are subordinate to the negotiations in which I am engaged concerning the letters. So rip your gown and give me the specimens of our wares. Where are the three packets of letters?"

"At la Rousse's, of course."

"Driver," cried Jacques Collin, "take us back to the Palais de Justice, and make haste.—I promised to be quick," he said to his aunt, "and I have been gone half an hour; that's too long. Stay at la Rousse's and give the sealed packets to the office boy, who will come and ask for Madame *de* Saint Estève. The *de* will be his password, and he will say to you: *Madame, I have come from the attorney-general for something you will know about.* Stand before la Rousse's door, and pretend to be watching what goes on in the flower market, so as not to draw Prélard's attention. As soon as you have despatched your letters, you can give your orders to Paccard and Prudence."

"I can guess what your are about," said Jacqueline; "you mean to take Bibi Lupin's place. That boy's death has made you crazy."

"And Théodore, too, who was to have his hair cut for execution at four o'clock this afternoon," cried Jacques Collin.

"It isn't such a bad idea, after all; we shall end our days as respectable citizens on a fine estate in the beautiful climate of Touraine."

"What could I do else? I lost my soul and my interest in life with Lucien; I have some thirty weary years ahead of me, and I have no heart left. Instead of being *boss* of the galleys, I shall be the Figaro of the law, and shall avenge Lucien. Unless I become one of the police I cannot be sure of demolishing Corentin. It will give me new life to have a man to ruin. Difference in position in the world is only in appearance; a man's ideas are the real thing," he added, tapping his forehead. "How much of our treasure have you still?"

"None at all," said his aunt, alarmed by the accent and manner of her nephew. "I gave you everything for the boy. La Romette has but twenty thousand francs to carry on her business. I took all Madame Nourrisson had, about sixty thousand francs. —We are sleeping in sheets that have not been washed for a year. That boy of yours used up all our treasure, all the *pals' wad,* and Madame Nourrisson's money in the bargain."

"And that was how much?"

"Five hundred and sixty thousand."—

"We have a hundred and fifty thousand in gold that Paccard and Prudence will owe us, and I will tell you where you can get two hundred thousand more.—The rest must come out of Esther's estate. We must pay back Nourrisson. With Théodore, Paccard, Prudence, Nourrisson and you, I shall soon have the whole blooming battalion I want.—Now, listen, for we are almost there."—

"Here are the three letters," said Jacqueline, who had just given the final snip of the scissors to the lining of her gown.

"Good," said Jacques Collin, taking the three precious autographs written on vellum paper, about which the perfume still lingered. "Théodore is guilty of the Nanterre job."

"Ah! it was he——"

"Hold your tongue, for time is precious. He wanted to fill the bill of his little Corsican bird, Ginetta.—You must set Nourrisson to work finding her, and I will send a letter with the necessary instructions to you by Gault. You must be at the gate of the Conciergerie in two hours from now. You will put the little girl up at the house of Godet's sister, who is a washerwoman, and let her lodge there.—Godet and Ruffard were la Pouraille's accomplices in the murder and robbery he committed at the Crottats. The four hundred and fifty thousand francs are intact: one-third, la Pouraille's share, is in la Gonore's cellar; Ruffard's share is in la Gonore's own room, and the third share is in Godet's sister's house. We shall begin by taking a

hundred and fifty thousand francs of la Pouraille's *wad*, then a hundred thousand of Godet's, and a hundred thousand of Ruffard's. When Ruffard and Godet are safely locked up, we shall make it appear that it was they themselves who set aside the missing part of their treasure. I can get Godet to believe that we have put away a hundred thousand francs for him, and Ruffard and la Pouraille that la Gonore saved theirs for them.—Prudence and Paccard are to do the work at la Gonore's, and you and Ginetta, she's a sly boots, shall manage at the sister Godet. I shall signalize my first appearance in comedy by finding the four hundred thousand francs stolen from the Crottats and the guilty men themselves, for the *stork*. I shall seem to clear up the Nanterre murder. We shall get back our money and be in the very heart of the police. We were the game, but we have turned hunters, that's all. Give three francs to the driver."—

The cab had stopped at the palace. Jacqueline, who was bewildered, paid the man, and Trompe-la-Mort went up the stairs on his way to the attorney-general.

A total change of his manner of life is such a violent crisis in a man's existence, that, in spite of his resolution, Jacques Collin walked slowly up the steps of the staircase that leads from the rue de la Barillerie to the Galerie Marchande, where the Public Prosecutor's offices open gloomily from under the peristyle of the Court of Assizes. Some political occurrence had drawn together a crowd at the foot

of the double stairway leading to the Court of Assizes, so that the ex-convict, who was absorbed in his reflections, was detained for some moments by the throng. At the left of this double stairway, there stands, like a vast pillar, one of the buttresses of the palace, and in the middle of the great mass of masonry of which it is composed, a little door is to be seen. The door opens upon a winding stair that serves as a means of communication with the Conciergerie, for the convenience of the attorney-general, the warden of the Conciergerie, the presidents of the Court of Assizes, the king's advocates and the Chief of the police. It was by a branch of this stairway, now fallen into disuse, that Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, was brought before the Revolutionary tribunal, which sat, as we know, in the great hall of solemn audience of the Court of Appeals.

It is sad to think that the daughter of Maria Theresa whose head-dress, crinoline and retinue once filled the whole stairway at Versailles, passed up this narrow, awful stair.—Perhaps it was in expiation of her mother's crime, the hideous division of Poland. Evidently the sovereigns who are guilty of such crimes forget the retribution ordained by Providence.

At the very moment that Jacques Collin was about to ascend the vaulted staircase to go to the attorney-general's office, Bibi-Lupin happened to come out by the secret door in the wall.

The chief of the detective police was on his way from the Conciergerie to M. de Granville.

It is easy to imagine Bibi Lupin's amazement when he saw himself confronted by the Abbé Carlos Herrera in the same dress in which he had observed him so particularly that morning. He ran on to try to get ahead of him, and Jacques Collin turned round. The two enemies found themselves face to face. Each stood motionless, and the same look flashed from the two pairs of eyes that were so different, just as two pistols are fired simultaneously in a duel.

"I have you this time, you brigand!" cried the Chief of police.

"Ah! you have, have you!"—answered Jacques Collin, ironically. It suddenly occurred to him that M. de Granville had ordered him to be followed, and strange to say, it pained him to think the attorney-general a smaller man than he had imagined.

Bibi Lupin sprang boldly at the throat of Jacques Collin, who, with his eye fixed upon his adversary, gave him a smart blow that sent him sprawling three paces away. Then Trompe-la-Mort walked up quietly to Bibi Lupin and put out his hand to help him to his feet, exactly like an English boxer, who is sure of his own strength and anxious for another round. Bibi Lupin had too much sense to make a noise, but he jumped up, ran to the entrance of the corridor, and beckoned to a gendarme to take his stand there. Then, quick as lightning, he returned to his enemy, who had been serenely watching him. Jacques Collin had made up his mind as to what he meant to do:

"Either the attorney-general has broken his word to me or he has not taken Bibi Lupin into his confidence; in that case I must explain the situation." "Do you want to arrest me?" he asked of his enemy. "If you do, say so, and be done with it. Don't you suppose I know you are the the stronger, here in the very heart of the police? I could kill you with a kick, but I couldn't manage all the gendarmes of the line. Let's be quiet about it; where do you want to take me?"

"To M. Camusot."

"Let's go to M. Camusot then," said Jacques Collin. "But why shouldn't we go to the attorney-general's office?—It is nearer," he added.

Bibi Lupin, who knew that he was in disfavor in the higher regions of judicial power, and suspected of making a fortune out of the criminals and their victims, was not sorry to present himself before the attorney-general with such prey as this.

"Very well," said he, "we'll go there; but since you give yourself up, let me tie you up a bit; I am afraid you might scratch."

And he drew the handcuffs out of his pocket.

Jacques Collin extended his hands, and Bibi Lupin fitted the irons upon them.

"Now, since you are so well-behaved," he continued, "tell me how you got out of the Conciergerie."

"By the little staircase, the same way that you came."

"You played another trick on the gendarmes, then?"

"No; M. de Granville let me go on parole."

"Are you joking?"

"You shall see.—Perhaps you may have a turn at the handcuffs yourself."

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At this very moment, Corentin was saying to the attorney-general:

"Now, sir, it is just an hour since our man went off, and aren't you afraid he was fooling you?—He is very likely already on the road to Spain, where we shan't find him in a hurry, for it's a very lawless country."

"Either I don't know a man when I see him, or Jacques Collin will come back; all his interests compel him to do so; he has more to gain in this than I."—

Just then, Bibi Lupin appeared.

"Sir," said he, "I have good news for you: I have re-arrested Jacques Collin, who had made his escape."

"There, you have not kept your word to me." cried Jacques Collin to M. de Granville. "Ask your double-faced agent where he found me."

"Where?" asked the attorney-general.

"A few steps from here, on the staircase," replied Bibi Lupin.

"Take off these irons of yours," said M. de Granville, severely to Bibi Lupin: "and let me tell you that you are to let that man alone until you have orders to arrest him again.—Now, go!—You are too much in the habit of behaving as if you had all the law and the police under your control."

The attorney-general turned his back on the

Chief of secret service, who turned pale, particularly as he caught a look from Jacques Collin that announced his downfall.

"I have not left my office, and have been waiting for you. You can't doubt that I have kept my word as you have kept yours," said M. de Granville to Jacques Collin.

"I doubted you for the first moment, sir, and perhaps, in my place, you would have thought as I did; but on reflection I see that I was unjust. I have more to give than you; you could have no interest in deceiving me."—

The magistrate exchanged a rapid glance with Corentin. Trompe la Mort saw it, for he was watching M. de Granville closely, and it called his attention to the curious little old man sitting in an arm-chair in the corner. Warned by his quick, keen instinct that assured him of the presence of an enemy, Jacques Collin observed the stranger, and seeing at once that his eyes did not correspond with the degree of age implied by his style of dress, he was sure that the man was disguised. Thus, in a moment, Jacques Collin had taken his revenge upon Corentin for the rapid inspection with which the latter had unmasked him at Peyrade's.

"We are not alone,"—said Jacques Collin to M. de Granville.

"No," replied the attorney-general, dryly.

"And this gentleman," continued the convict, "is one of my most valued acquaintances—is it not so?"—

He stepped forward and recognized Corentin, the real and avowed author of Lucien's destruction. Jacques Collin, whose face was naturally brick-red, became, for a moment of almost imperceptible duration, pale and nearly white; all his blood rushed to his heart, so great was his wild and frantic desire to leap upon this dangerous brute and crush the life from his limbs. But he forced back his savage impulse, and, repressing it with the energy that made him so formidable, he assumed the amiable manner and tone of obsequious politeness to which he had accustomed himself while playing the part of an ecclesiastic of high rank.

"Monsieur Corentin," said he, bowing to the little old man, "is it to chance I owe the pleasure of meeting you, or have I the honor of being the object of your visit to the office?"

The attorney-general was amazed, and devoted his attention to the two men who had met face to face. Jacques Collin's movements and tone of voice indicated a crisis, and M. de Granville was curious to discover the cause. At the convict's sudden and remarkable recognition of his personality, Corentin started up as a snake does when some one has trodden on its tail.

"Yes, it is I, my dear Abbé Carlos Herrera."

"Have you come to interpose between the attorney-general and me,"—asked Trompe-la-Mort, "or am I so happy as to be the subject of one of those negotiations in which your talents are so conspicuous?—Here, sir," he added, turning to the

attorney-general, "in order that you may not waste your valuable time, here are the specimens of my wares; you may read them."—

He handed M. de Granville the three letters which he took from the inside pocket of his coat.

"While you are looking over them I shall have a little talk with this gentleman, if you will allow me."

"That is a great honor for me," said Corentin, who could not repress a shudder.

"You were completely successful in the contest we had together, sir," said Jacques Collin; "I was beaten," he added, as lightly as the gambler who has lost his stakes; "but you left some men on the field.—It was a dearly bought victory."—

"Yes," said Corentin, carrying on the jest; "if you lost your queen, I lost my two castles."—

"Oh! Contenson was nothing but a pawn," said Jacques Collin, in a mocking tone. "You can easily replace him. If you will allow me to praise you to your face, I should like to say that I think you an extraordinary man, *upon my honor I do.*"—

"Oh! no. I bow before your superiority," replied Corentin, with the air of a professional jester who says, "If you want *chaff,* very good; let's have it." "You know I have everything at my command," he continued, "whereas you are quite alone, so to speak."—

"Ha! you think so!" remarked Jacques Collin.

"And yet you nearly won the battle," said Corentin, noticing his exclamation. "You are the most

wonderful man I have ever met, and I have seen many who were wonderful in their way, for the people I am pitted against are all remarkable for their daring and for the boldness of their conceptions. To my misfortune, I was very intimate with the late Duke d'Otrante; I worked for Louis XVIII. during his reign, and, after his exile, for the Emperor and the Directory.—You have the stamp of Louvel, who was the most perfect political instrument I ever saw; and, besides, you have the versatility of the prince of diplomats. And what allies you have!—I could send many heads to the guillotine if I could have poor little Esther's cook in my service.—Where did you find that pretty creature who took the Jewess's place with M. de Nucingen for a time? I can't find such people when I want them."

"Sir, sir," said Jacques Collin, "you overwhelm me.—Such praise from you would turn any man's head."—

"You deserve it all. Just think! You deceived Peyrade, who took you for an officer of the peace. —If you had not had that little fool to defend, you would have beaten us all."—

"You forget, sir, that Contenson was disguised as a mulatto,—and Peyrade as an Englishman. Actors have the resources of the stage, but only you and yours can be so great at all times, even in broad daylight."—

"Now," said Corentin, "we are each persuaded of the other's skill and merit. We are both lonely, too, for I have lost my old friend, and you the

young fellow you had under your wing. At this present moment I am the stronger of the two, so why shouldn't we follow the example of the people in the *Auberge des Adrets?* I hold out my hand and say 'Let us shake hands and be friends.' Here in the presence of the attorney-general I offer you a full and complete pardon; you shall be one of my men, next to myself, and perhaps in time you may succeed me."

"So you offer me a position?"—said Jacques Collin. "A pretty position, too! I am to change characters."—

"You will find yourself in a sphere where your talents will be appreciated, well-rewarded, and you can do as you please. The political and governmental police has its perils; even I have been twice imprisoned,—but I am none the worse for it. Then you can travel, and be anything you like.—You will be the scene-shifter in political dramas, and great lords will treat you with consideration.—How do you like the idea of all this, my dear Jacques Collin?"—

"Have you your orders for this?" asked the convict.

"I have full authority,"—replied Corentin, much pleased with his happy inspiration.

"You are jesting; you are a wonderfully clever man, and you can't object to my mistrusting you. —You have sold more than one man by tying him up in the bag into which you had first made him jump of his own free will.—I know your famous battles—the Montauran and the Simeuse affairs.

They might be called the Marengos of the detective world."

"You esteem the attorney-general, don't you?" asked Corentin.

"Yes," replied Jacques Collin, bowing respectfully; "I admire his noble character, firmness and high-mindedness, and would give my life to make him happy. The first thing I shall do will be to put an end to Madame de Sérizy's dangerous condition."

The attorney-general showed that he was pleased.

"Then you may ask him," resumed Corentin, "if I have not full authority to save you from your present disgraceful position, and put you in my train."

"It is all true," said M. de Granville to the convict.

"True that I shall receive absolution for my past and a promise to succeed you, provided I give sufficient proof of my ability?"

"Between two men like ourselves, no misconception is possible," rejoined Corentin with a magnanimous air that was most convincing.

"Of course the price of this transaction is the restoration of the three packets of letters?"—remarked Jacques Collin.

"I thought it would be superfluous to mention it."—

"My dear Monsieur Corentin," said Trompe-la-Mort with an irony equal to that which achieved Talma's triumph, in his part of Nicomède, "I thank you, and am indebted to you for letting me know my own worth and the importance attached to

depriving me of my weapons.—I shall never forget it,—I shall be forever at your service, and, instead of saying, like Robert Macaire : 'Let us embrace each other,' I shall begin by embracing you."

He seized Corentin round the waist so quickly that the latter was unable to escape his embrace; he pressed him to his heart like a puppet, kissed him on both cheeks, lifted him up with one hand, like a feather, and opening the office door with the other, set him down outside, bruised and shaken with the rough treatment he had received.

"Good-bye, my dear fellow," he whispered in a low voice. "We are separated from each other by three dead bodies; we have measured swords, and they are of the same size and temper.—Let us respect each other, but I must be your equal, not your subordinate.—With such arms as you possess, I think you would be too dangerous a general for your lieutenant. We shall set a boundary between us, and woe unto you if you invade my territory.—You call yourself the State, just as lackeys are known by their master's name; so I shall borrow the name of Justice. We shall often see each other, and let us continue to treat each other with all the more dignity and propriety, for the reason that we shall always be—abominable rascals," he added, in his ear. "I set you an example by embracing you."—

Corentin was confused for the first time in his life, and allowed his terrible adversary to shake his hand.

"If it is as you say," said he, "I think it will be for our mutual interest to remain *friends.*"

"We shall each be stronger on our own side, and more dangerous, too," continued Jacques Collin, in a low tone. "So you will allow me to ask you to-morrow for the earnest of our bargain."—

"I see," said Corentin, good-naturedly, "that you are taking this business out of my hands to place it in the attorney-general's. You will be the cause of his promotion, but I cannot help telling you that you are doing right.—Bibi Lupin is too well known, and his day is over; if you succeed him you will find yourself in the only position appropriate to you, and I shall be charmed to see you occupying it;—upon my word I shall."—

"I hope we shall soon see each other again," said Jacques Collin.

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Upon his return, Trompe-la-Mort found the attorney-general sitting at his desk, with his head buried in his hands.

"Do you really mean that you can prevent the Countess de Sérizy from becoming insane?"—asked M. de Granville.

"In five minutes," replied Jacques Collin.

"And you can return me all the letters of the three ladies?"

"Have you read the three I gave you?"—

"Yes," said the attorney-general, quickly; "and I blush for the women who wrote them."—

"Very well; we are alone now; give orders that no one shall be admitted, and we can come to terms," said Jacques Collin.

"One moment;—the law must do its duty first of all, and M. Camusot has orders to arrest your aunt."—

"He can never find her," said Jacques Collin.

"The police are to search an establishment kept in the Temple by a certain Mademoiselle Paccard."—

"They will find nothing but rags, old clothes, diamonds and uniforms. Still we must put some limit to M. Camusot's zeal."

M. de Granville rang and told the office boy to ask M. Camusot to come and speak with him.

"Now," said he to Jacques Collin, "let us make

an end of this. I am most anxious to learn your receipt for curing the countess."—

"Sir," said Jacques gravely, "I was, as you know, sentenced to five years of penal servitude for the crime of forgery. I love my liberty,—but this love of mine, like all other loves, defeated its own object, for lovers quarrel when they are too adoring. Owing to my escape and recapture I have passed seven years in all at the galleys, so you have to pardon me only for the increase of penalty I incurred —incurred at the *field*—pardon, at the galleys— I have really undergone my punishment, and, until they find me in another crime—which I defy the law and even Corentin to do, I ought to be restored to my rights as a French citizen. Exiled from Paris, and under the supervision of the police, what kind of a life should I have? Where could I go, and what could I do? You know my capacity; you saw Corentin himself, that mass of stratagem and treachery, turn pale before me and do justice to my talents.—That man has robbed me of my all; for it was he, and he alone, who, I know not by what means, nor in what interest, overthrew Lucien's fortunes.—Corentin and Camusot did everything in their power ——"

"No recriminations," said M. de Granville, "go straight to the point."

"Here is the point, then. Last night, as I held the cold hand of the poor dead boy in mine, I resolved to renounce the frantic warfare that I have been waging against the whole of society for twenty

years. You cannot suspect me of any affected piety after what I have told you of my religious opinions.—For twenty years I have seen the world on its seamy side, in its dens and cellars, and I have been obliged to recognize that in the course of things there is a force that you call *Providence,* that I used to call *chance,* and that my companions call *luck.* Every wrong action is visited with retribution of some sort, however adroit a man may be in trying to escape it. In this fight against the world he may have the best cards in his hands and the lead to boot; then a candle falls and sets fire to the cards, or he himself is struck with apoplexy.—That is Lucien's story. That angelic boy never committed the shadow of a crime. He only allowed others to lead him and do with him as they chose. He was to marry Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, and to be made a marquis; his career seemed assured; well! a girl unexpectedly poisons herself, hides the proceeds of the title of an annuity, and the edifice of his fortunes that had been so laboriously raised, crumbles in a moment. Who was it that gave us the first sword thrust? A man covered with secret infamy, a monster who has committed such crimes in the business world—see *The House of Nucingen*—that every penny of his fortune has been drenched with the tears of a family; it was Nucingen,—a Jacques Collin in the world of finance,—who had managed to keep within the bounds of the law. You know as well as I the bankruptcies and damnable tricks of that man. My irons will always brand my actions, even the

most virtuous. To be a shuttlecock between two battledores, the galleys and the police, is a life in which success involves infinite labor, and peace seems impossible. Jacques Collin is now being buried, Monsieur de Granville, with Lucien, whom they are at this moment sprinkling with holy water before taking him to Père-Lachaise. I need a place, not to live in, but to die in.—In the present state of things, the law has not taken into consideration the civil and social condition of the released convict. The law may be satisfied, but society is not; it continues to mistrust him and tries to justify its suspicions to itself. It makes him an impossible being; it should restore all his rights, but it forbids him to live within certain limits. Society says to the released convict: 'Paris is the only place you can hide in, but you shall live neither in Paris nor in her suburbs within a prescribed distance.'—Moreover, society subjects the convict to the supervision of the police. Do you think it possible to live under such conditions? To live a man must work, for he doesn't come out from the galleys with money in his pocket. You take pains that the convict shall be plainly marked, easily recognized and penned in on every side, and then you expect your citizens to have confidence in him, when society, law and the world about him have none. You compel him to starve or to commit crime. He can find no work, and is fatally impelled toward his old trade that is sure to send him to the scaffold. So, although I wished to renounce my struggle against the law, I

could find no place to live in. Only one position would suit me, and that is in the service of the authority that presses so heavily against us, and, as this idea occurred to me, I became conscious of the power in my hands, that I have told you of. Three great families who are under my control. Don't think that I want to blackmail them. Blackmail is one of the basest of crimes ; in my eyes it is viler than murder, for the murderer is possessed of demoniacal courage. I am willing to act out my opinions, for the letters that ensure my safety and allow me to speak with you as I am doing now on equal terms—I who represent crime, with you who represent the law—are at your disposal. You may send your office boy for them and they will be handed over to him.—I ask no compensation, for I do not sell them. Alas! sir, when I laid them away I was not thinking of myself, but of Lucien's possible danger. If you do not see fit to comply with my request, I am tired enough of life and have enough courage left to blow my brains out and rid you of me.—Or, with a passport, I could go to America and live there in solitude, for I have stuff in me that would make a savage.—Such are my last night's thoughts. Your secretary must have repeated to you the message which I charged him with. When I saw the precautions you were taking to save Lucien's memory from blame, I gave my life to you, a poor gift indeed! I cared for it no longer ; I saw that I could not carry it on without the light that illuminated it, or the happiness that animated it ; without the thought that gives it

meaning, the well-being of the young poet who was its sun, and I determined to give you the three packets of letters.—

M. de Granville bowed.

"Then I went into the prison-yard, where I found the authors of the crime of Nanterre, and learned that my young chain companion was under sentence of death for his involuntary participation in their crime. I heard that Bibi Lupin is cheating the law, that one of his agents is the murderer of the Crottats; and was it not what you call providential?—Then it was that I foresaw the possibility of doing good, of employing my natural gifts and the melancholy knowledge I have acquired for the service of society, and of being useful instead of harmful, so I ventured to count on your intelligent comprehension and your goodness."

The air of frankness and ingenuous simplicity with which the man made his confession, without any of the harsh philosophy of vice that had hitherto made him so terrible to listen to, seemed convincing proof of his transformation. He was no longer the same person.

"I have such implicit faith in you that I wish to put myself entirely at your disposal," he went on with penitent humility. "You see me standing where three roads meet: suicide, America and the rue de Jérusalem. Bibi Lupin is rich and has served his time; he is double-faced in his dealings with you, and if you give me leave to act against him I will *punch his chestnut*—catch him in the act in less than a week. If you give me the rogue's place

you will be doing a great service to society. *I need nothing more*—I shall be honest with you—and I have all the qualities required for the office. I am better educated than Bibi Lupin, and even went so far as studying rhetoric at school. I shall be cleverer than he, and can have good manners when I choose. I have no other ambition than that of becoming an element of law and order, and ceasing to be a type of corruption. I shall never induce anybody else to enlist in the great army of vice. When you take the enemy's general captive on the field of battle, sir, you don't shoot him, but you return him his sword and give him a town for a prison. Well, I am the general of the galleys, and I surrender. I am not overcome by the law, but by the death of a friend. The sphere in which I desire to move and act is the sole one fitted to me, and in it I can develop the power that I am conscious of possessing.—You must decide."—

Jacques Collin maintained a humble but respectful attitude.

"You have placed the letters at my disposal?"—said the attorney-general.

"You may send for them, and they will be given to your messenger."

"How can that be?"

Jacques Collin read the heart of the attorney-general, and continued to play the same game.

"You have promised me to commute Calvi's sentence of death to twenty years of penal servitude. Oh! I don't say this to make a treaty with you,"

he exclaimed quickly in reply to a gesture from the attorney-general;—"his life must be saved on other grounds, for the boy is innocent."—

"How can I get the letters?" asked the attorney-general. "It is my right and my duty to know whether you are the man you say you are. I want no conditions—"

"Send a man you can trust to the Quai aux Fleurs, and there he will see at the door of a hardware shop at the sign of the *Shield of Achilles*—"

"The house of the shield?"—

"Yes," said Jacques Collin, with a bitter smile, "my shield is there. Your messenger will find an old woman, dressed, as I told you before, like a well-to-do fish-wife, with ear-rings in her ears; altogether, in the costume of a rich market-woman. Your man must ask her for Madam *de* Saint Estève, and don't let him forget the *de*.—Then he must say *The attorney-general sends me for something you know about*, and she will instantly give him the three sealed packets."—

"Are the letters all there?" inquired M. de Granville.

"You are thorough!" said Jacques Collin, smiling; "you did not get your office on false pretences. I see that you think me capable of playing with you and giving you blank paper.—You don't know me," he added; "I trust you as a son does his father."—

"You are to be taken back to the Conciergerie," said the attorney-general, "and to await there the decision that will be made concerning you."

The attorney-general rang, and said to the boy who answered the bell:

"Ask M. Garnery to come here, if you find him at home."

Besides the forty-eight commissaries of the police who watch over Paris like forty-eight minor providences, and not counting the officers of the detective police, who have given rise to the term of *quarter of an eye* in thieves' slang, as there are four of them in every ward of the city, there are two other commissaries attached both to the police and to the courts to execute delicate missions, and occasionally to replace the examining judges. The office of these two magistrates, for these commissaries of the police are really magistrates, is called the office of the deputies, inasmuch as the commissaries are regularly deputed and appointed to effect searches and arrests. This position calls for men of ripe age, proved capacity, high moral character and absolute discretion, and it is one of those miracles that Providence works for Paris that it is always possible to find men of this stamp. A description of Paris would be inexact without a mention of this *preventive* magistracy, so to speak, which is a powerful auxiliary of the law; for if the law, through the stress of circumstances, has lost any part of its ancient pomp and splendor, we must acknowledge that in other ways it has gained materially. At Paris especially, its mechanism has reached a high degree of perfection.

M. de Granville had sent his secretary, M. de

Chargebœuf, to Lucien's funeral, so that he now needed a trustworthy man to send in his stead on this mission, and M. Garnery was one of the two commissary deputies.

"Sir," resumed Jacques Collin, "I have already proved to you that I have a regard for my honor.—You let me go free, and I came back to you.—It is nearly eleven o'clock—the requiem mass for Lucien must be nearly over, and they will be taking him to the cemetery.—Instead of sending me back to the Conciergerie let me follow that boy's body to Père Lachaise. I will come back and give myself up to you again."—

"Go," said M. de Granville, very kindly.

"One last word, sir. The money of that girl, Lucien's mistress, was not stolen.—In the few free moments you allowed me I was able to question some friends—I am as sure of them as you are of your two commissary deputies, therefore I know that the money raised by Esther Gobseck on the title of the annuity will be found in her room on the removal of the seals. Her maid told me that she was very suspicious and secretive, and probably hid the banknotes in her bed. Give orders to have the bed carefully searched and taken apart; let them open the mattress and pillows, and the money will be found."—

"Are you sure of it?"

"I can rely on the relative honesty of my rogues, for they never deceive me.—I have power of life and death over them; I judge and condemn

them, and I execute my sentences without any of your formalities. You have already seen what my power can effect. I shall find for you the money that was stolen from M. and Madame Crottat; I mean to *catch* Bibi Lupin's chief agent and right-hand *at one of his tricks*, and I can tell you the secret of the crime that was committed at Nanterre.—That's the earnest of what I shall do for you!—Now, if you will put me in the service of the law and the police, you will be pleased with my disclosures before the year is over. I promise to be all that you require, and I am confident of succeeding in the business with which I am entrusted."

"I am not at liberty to promise anything farther than my good will," replied M. de Granville. "What you ask does not depend upon me. The King alone, on the report of the Keeper of the Seals, has the right to grant a pardon, and the position which you want is in the gift of the Prefect of the Police."

"M. Garnery," announced the office boy.

At a motion from the attorney-general the commissary-deputy entered, and, recognizing Jacques Collin at a glance, repressed his astonishment at hearing M. de Granville tell the convict that he was free to go.

"Will you allow me," said Jacques Collin, "to stay until M. Garnery has delivered all my arms to you, so that I may carry with me a proof of your satisfaction?"

His humility and evident good faith touched the attorney-general.

"Go," said he to him, "I am sure of you."

Jacques Collin bowed low with the deference due from an inferior to his superior. Ten minutes later M. de Granville was in possession of the three packets of letters, the seals of which were still unbroken. The importance of the transaction and Jacques Collin's half-confession made him forget the convict's promise to cure Madame de Sérizy.

Once outside Jacques Collin experienced a feeling of ineffable well-being. He felt himself a free man, and born again into a new life, and walked briskly from the palais to the church of Saint-Germain des Près, where mass was already over. They were sprinkling holy water on the bier, and Jacques Collin arrived in time to share in this Christian rite of farewell to the mortal remains of the boy he had loved so tenderly, then he got into a cab and followed the body to the cemetery.

In funerals at Paris, except in the case of the burial of some celebrity, or when death has occurred under extraordinary circumstances, the crowd that collects at the church gradually diminishes on the way to Père Lachaise. People find time to be present at the services, but everybody is in haste to return to his business. On this occasion, therefore, of the ten mourning coaches not four were filled, and when the procession reached Père Lachaise the cortége was composed of only a dozen persons, one of whom was Rastignac.

"It is very well that you are faithful to *him!*" said Jacques Collin to his old acquaintance.

Rastignac started with surprise at seeing Vautrin, the former boarder at Madame Vauquer's.

"Be calm," Jacques Collin went on, "the mere fact of seeing you here is enough to make me your slave. My support is not to be despised, for I am or shall be, more powerful than ever. You have slipped your cable, and have been very sharp, but you may perhaps need me hereafter, and I am always at your service."

"What are you going to be ?"

"The purveyor of the galleys instead of being a lodger there," answered Jacques Collin.

Rastignac made a motion expressive of disgust.

"Ah! you may be robbed,"—said Jacques Collin.

Rastignac quickened his pace to get away from Jacques Collin.

"You cannot tell in what circumstances you may find yourself," added the convict.

They had by that time reached the grave that was dug beside Esther's.

"These two creatures, who loved each other and were so happy, are now reunited," said Jacques Collin. "There is still some happiness for them in coming to dust together. I shall lie there, too."

When Lucien's body was lowered into the grave, Jacques Collin fell down in a dead faint. Strong man that he was, he could not endure the slight noise of the few shovelsful of earth that the grave-diggers threw upon the coffin before coming to ask for their fees. At that moment two detective agents

appeared on the scene, recognized Jacques Collin, and carried him into a cab.

"What is the matter now?"—asked Jacques Collin, after regaining consciousness and looking round him in the cab.

He found himself seated between two police agents; one of these he recognized as Ruffard, and turned a look on him that probed the assassin's soul and read the secret of la Gonore that was written there.

"The attorney-general has asked for you," answered Ruffard, "we have gone everywhere to look for you, and found you only in the cemetery, where you came near tumbling head-first into that young man's grave."

Jacques Collin was silent for a moment.

"Was it Bibi Lupin who sent for me?" he asked of the other police agent.

"No; it was M. Garnery," was the answer.

"Did he say nothing to you?"

The two agents consulted each other's opinion in expressive dumb show.

"Tell me, how did he give you the order?"

"He ordered us," replied Ruffard, "to bring you immediately, and told us you were at the Church of Saint-Germain des Prés, but that if the procession had left the church you would be at the cemetery."

"Did the attorney-general ask for me?"

"Perhaps he did."

"That's it," rejoined Jacques Collin; "he needs me."—

He relapsed again into silence that discomfited the

two agents. About half-past two, as Jacques Collin entered M. de Granville's office, he found there a gentleman who was a stranger to him, the Count Octave de Bauvan, M. de Granville's predecessor, one of the presidents of the Court of Appeals.

"You have forgotten Madame de Sérizy's danger, and you promised me to save her," said the attorney-general.

"Sir, you may ask those fellows of yours what condition they found me in," said Jacques Collin, signing to the two detectives to enter.

"Quite unconscious, sir, on the brink of the grave of the young man they were burying," said one of the police agents.

"Save Madame de Sérizy," said M. de Bauvan, "and you may have everything you want."

"I want nothing," returned Jacques Collin; "I surrendered without conditions, and the attorney-general must have already received——"

"All the letters," interrupted M. de Granville; "but you promised to save Madame de Sérizy's reason; can you really do it, or was it only out of bravado that you said so?"

"I hope to be able to accomplish it," replied Jacques Collin, modestly.

"Very well; come with me, then," said the Count Octave.

"No, sir," said Jacques Collin; "I could not sit beside you in the same carriage,—I am still a convict. I desire to serve the law, and I cannot begin by dishonoring it.—Go to the Countess's, and I

shall be there a little later.—Tell her that Lucien's best friend, the Abbé Carlos Herrera, is coming to see her,—and the knowledge of his intended visit will necessarily make an impression upon her and render the crisis favorable. You will be so good as to allow me to return for this once to my assumed character of a Spanish ecclesiastic, as it is for the purpose of doing a good action."

"I shall meet you there about four," said M. de Granville; "I am now going to the King with the Keeper of the Seals."

Jacques Collin went back to his aunt, who was waiting for him on the Quai aux Fleurs.

"Then you have given yourself up to the *stork?*" she said.

"Yes."

"That's risky."

"No; I owed poor Théodore his life, and he will be pardoned."

"And you yourself?"

"I shall be precisely what I should be. I shall always make our people tremble before me.—But you must go to work. Go and tell Paccard to bestir himself, and make Europe carry out my orders."

"That's all right; I know how to manage la Gonore!"—said the terrible Jacqueline. "I haven't been lying idle, losing my time with the *dimber girls.*"

"Ginetta, the Corsican girl, must be found by to-morrow," added Jacques Collin, smiling at his aunt.

"Somebody must put me on her tracks."

"Manon la Blonde will," replied Jacques Collin.

"We'll have her to-night, then," said his aunt. "You are as keen as a hawk about it.—There must be *some fat* in it."

"I want my first efforts to surpass the best thing Bibi Lupin ever did. I had a little conversation with the monster that killed my Lucien, and I live only to take my revenge upon him. Thanks to our two positions we shall be equally armed, and under equal patronage. I shall need several years to hit the wretch, but I shall strike him to the heart in the end."

"He must owe you an equal grudge," said his aunt, "for he has taken home with him Peyrade's girl; the same one, you know, who was sold to Madame Nourrisson.

"The first thing we must do is to give him a servant."

"That will be a hard job, for he knows what he is about," said Jacqueline.

"Hatred will help things along. Go to work all of you."

Jacques Collin hailed a cab and drove without delay to the little room on the Quai Malaquais, where he had lodged and which was separate from Lucien's apartment. The porter was amazed to see him, and was anxious to talk over the events that had just occurred.

"I know everything," said the pretended Abbé. "I was compromised in spite of the sanctity of my

character, but I have been set at liberty, thanks to the intervention of the Spanish ambassador."

He ran up quickly to his room, and took from inside a breviary a letter that Lucien had written to Madame de Sérizy at the time she had dismissed him in disgrace, after seeing him with Esther at the opera.

Lucien had never sent this masterly letter, for in his despair he had thought himself lost forever; but Jacques Collin had read it, and, as everything Lucien wrote was sacred in his eyes, he had laid it aside in his breviary for the sake of the poetic expressions of a love that was all vanity. When M. de Granville had spoken to Jacques Collin of Madame de Sérizy's dangerous condition, it justly occurred to the acute ex-convict that the reason of the great lady's despair and madness must lie in the quarrel she had allowed to subsist between Lucien and herself. He knew women as a judge knows criminals, and could guess the most secret feelings of their hearts, so it struck him at once that the countess must think herself partly responsible for Lucien's death, on account of her cruelty towards him, and that she must consequently reproach herself most bitterly for it. It was clear that if she had made him happy with her love he would never have killed himself. The knowledge that Lucien had always loved her, in spite of her unkindness, might restore her reason.

Jacques Collin was a great general of the galleys, and he was no less a great healer of souls, so his

arrival at the Hotel Sérizy brought with it both shame and hope. Besides the count and the doctors several persons had been waiting in the little boudoir that opened into the countess' sleeping apartment: to keep his honor from all stain the Count de Bauvan sent everybody away and remained alone with his friend. It was a severe shock for the vice-president of the Council of State and a member of the Privy Council to be obliged to receive so sombre and sinister a guest.

Jacques Collin had changed his dress and appeared in coat and trousers of black cloth; his manner, look and gesture were in accordance with perfect propriety. He bowed to the two statesmen and asked if he could enter the countess' bed-chamber.

"She is expecting you with impatience," said M. de Bauvan.

"With impatience?—Then she is saved," said the terrible magician.

And so it was, for after a conversation of half an hour's duration, Jacques Collin opened the door, saying:

"Come in, count, you have nothing further to fear."

The countess was holding the letter pressed against her heart; she was calm and apparently reconciled with herself. Upon seeing this the count heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"And these are the men who decide upon our destinies and those of a whole race!" thought Jacques

Collin, shrugging his shoulders, as the two friends passed into the adjoining room. "A woman's sigh turns their brain inside out like a glove; they lose their heads at a glance from her. If she puts on a petticoat a little longer or a little shorter, they race about Paris in despair. The vagaries of a woman react upon the State. Oh! how much stronger a man is when he has escaped, like me, being subject to their childish tyranny, their virtue that is so easily overset by passion, their open profligacy, and savage wiles! Woman, with her genius for racking and torturing is, and always will be, the ruin of man. Attorney-general, minister, and all the rest of them, are writhing in blind agony to get back the letters of a duchess and a little girl, and to restore reason to a woman who will be madder with all her senses than ever she was when she was crazy."

He smiled proudly.

"And they all believe me," said he; "they act as I order them, and they will leave me in my rightful place. I shall always reign over the same world that has obeyed me for twenty-five years."—

Jacques Collin had brought to bear upon Madame de Sérizy the supreme power that he had before exerted over poor Esther. As we have often seen, his words, looks and gestures had ascendency over mad people, and he succeeded in persuading the countess that Lucien had died with her image in his heart.

No woman can resist the idea that she alone has been beloved.

"You have no rival now," was his last word of calculating mockery.

He stayed in the parlor for an hour, quite forgotten. When M. de Granville returned he found him standing there, serious, and lost in such a revery as is natural to a man who is deciding upon the 18th Brumaire in his life.

The attorney-general stepped to the threshold of the countess' room, and remained there a few moments; then he returned to Jacques Collin, and asked:

"Do you persist in your intention?"

"I do, sir."

"Then you shall have Bibi Lupin's place, and Calvi's sentence shall be commuted."

"He will not be sent to Rochefort?"

"Not even to Toulon, and you can employ him in your service; but his pardon and your nomination must depend upon your conduct during the six months in which you are to be Bibi Lupin's assistant."

Within a week Bibi Lupin's assistant enabled the police to return the four hundred thousand francs that had been stolen from the Crottat family, and delivered Ruffard and Godet into the hands of the law.

Esther Gobseck's money was discovered in her bed, and M. de Sérizy paid Jacques Collin the three hundred thousand francs that were left to him in Lucien de Rubempré's will.

The monument that Lucien ordered for Esther

and himself is considered one of the finest in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, and the ground about it belongs to Jacques Collin.

After working in his new position for about fifteen years, Jacques Collin retired in 1845.

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